



COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Thursday 24 November 2022 at 8.30 pm

Place: Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall

Link for public online access to this meeting:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3372734753066696461>

Webinar ID: 916-278-763

Telephone (listen-only): 0330 221 9922, Telephone Access code: 329-554-161

The members listed below are summoned to attend the Community and Wellbeing Committee meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Councillor Alex Coley (Chair)
Councillor Christine Cleveland (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Bernice Froud
Councillor Luke Giles
Councillor Christine Howells

Councillor Debbie Monksfield
Councillor Julie Morris
Councillor Phil Neale
Councillor Guy Robbins
Councillor Peter Webb

Yours sincerely

Interim Chief Executive

For further information, please contact Democratic Services, 01372 732122 or democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

No emergency drill is planned to take place during the meeting. If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by council staff. It is vital that you follow their instructions.

- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building, but move to the assembly point at Dullshot Green and await further instructions; and
- Do not re-enter the building until told that it is safe to do so.

Public information

Please note that this meeting will be held at the Town Hall, Epsom and will be available to observe live on the internet

This meeting will be open to the press and public to attend as an observer using free GoToWebinar software, or by telephone.

A link to the online address for this meeting is provided on the first page of this agenda and on the Council's website. A telephone connection number is also provided on the front page of this agenda as a way to observe the meeting, and will relay the full audio from the meeting as an alternative to online connection. A limited number of seats will also be available in the public gallery at the Town Hall. For further information please contact Democratic Services, email: democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk, telephone: 01372 732000.

Information about the terms of reference and membership of this Committee are available on the [Council's website](#). The website also provides copies of agendas, reports and minutes.

Agendas, reports and minutes for this Committee are also available on the free Modern.Gov app for iPad, Android and Windows devices. For further information on how to access information regarding this Committee, please email us at Democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk.

Exclusion of the Press and the Public

There are no matters scheduled to be discussed at this meeting that would appear to disclose confidential or exempt information under the provisions Schedule 12A of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. Should any such matters arise during the course of discussion of the below items or should the Chairman agree to discuss any other such matters on the grounds of urgency, the Committee will wish to resolve to exclude the press and public by virtue of the private nature of the business to be transacted.

Questions from the Public

Questions from the public are permitted at meetings of this Committee. Any person wishing to ask a question at a meeting of this Committee must register to do so, as set out below.

Up to 30 minutes will be set aside for written or oral questions from any member of the public who lives, works, attends an educational establishment or owns or leases land in the Borough on matters within the Terms of Reference of the Community and Wellbeing Committee which may not include matters listed on a Committee Agenda.

All questions whether written or oral must consist of one question only, they cannot consist of multi parts or of a statement.

The question or topic may not relate to a specific planning application or decision under the Planning Acts, a specific application for a licence or permit of any kind, the personal affairs of an individual, or a matter which is exempt from disclosure or confidential under the Local Government Act 1972. Questions which in the view of the Chairman are vexatious or frivolous will not be accepted.

To register to ask a question at a meeting of this Committee, please contact Democratic Services, email: democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk, telephone: 01372 732000.

Written questions must be received by Democratic Services by noon on the tenth working day before the day of the meeting. For this meeting this is **Noon, Thursday 10 November 2022**

Registration for oral questions is open until noon on the second working day before the day of the meeting. For this meeting this is **Noon, Tuesday 22 November 2022**

AGENDA

1. QUESTION TIME

To take any questions from members of the Public.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in respect of any item of business to be considered at the meeting.

3. HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY (Pages 5 - 90)

This report outlines the results of the consultation on the draft Homelessness Review, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan and recommends the adoption of Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027.

This page is intentionally left blank

HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY

Head of Service:	Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision? (yes/no)	
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1: Homelessness Review Appendix 2: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27 Appendix 3: Action Plan Appendix 4: Summary report on the consultation of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment

Summary

This report outlines the results of the consultation on the draft Homelessness Review, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan and recommends the adoption of Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Notes the outcome of the consultation with range of stakeholders, service users, staff and residents.**
- (2) Adopt of Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan 2022-27.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To ensure the Council has a current Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan.

2 Background

- 2.1 On 17 March 2022 the Community and Wellbeing Committee agreed that the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, Action Plan and Homelessness Review were submitted to public consultation. A copy of the Committee report is available as other papers for background information.
- 2.2 It was agreed, that following the consultation, the draft Strategy and Action Plan will be reviewed and be brought back to this Committee for consideration, and if agreed, it would then be adopted.
- 2.3 Legal background and the purpose of the review and strategy**
- 2.4 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on every local authority to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy, setting out how the local authority intends to tackle and prevent homelessness in their area.
- 2.5 The strategy must be based on a review of all forms of homelessness within that local authority's area and should be reviewed at least every five years. The purpose of the Homelessness Review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the area, identify future trends and any gaps in the service currently being provided.
- 2.6 The review should assess the:
- Levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the borough
 - Activities that are carried out which prevent homelessness, secure accommodation for homeless people and provide support to people who are or may become homeless
 - Resources available to carry out these activities.
- 2.7 In addition, the Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities sets out some requirements for a Homelessness Strategy. It should:
- Link to the wider contributory factors of homelessness, such as health, wellbeing, employment and economic factors.
 - Be consistent with other corporate strategies and objectives.
 - Involve partners in implementing the strategic homelessness objectives.
 - Have an Action Plan to show how the strategic objectives will be achieved.
 - Be monitored and reviewed during the life of the Strategy.

2.8 In 2018 the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) also published its “Rough Sleeping Strategy” which set out the government’s vision “to support every person who sleeps rough off the streets and into a home”; to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027. It focuses on three key themes: Prevention; Intervention; and Recovery. In 2021 this was further enhanced to include Systems Support to embed change and monitor progress.

2.9 In September 2022, DLUHC published a new cross-government strategy to end rough sleeping called “Ending Rough Sleeping for Good”. The principles of this new strategy are already included with EEBC’s Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. Any new requirements will be taken into account when developing EEBC’s Ending Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan, which is 2.1 of the Action Plan.

2.10 The Homelessness Review

2.11 In developing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy a detailed review of homelessness in Epsom & Ewell has been undertaken.

2.12 The purpose of the Homelessness Review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the area, identifying future trends and any gaps in the service currently being provided.

2.13 The review has considered a range of information including:

- Number of homeless approaches
- Reasons for homelessness
- Homeless Prevention and Relief cases and outcomes
- Support needs of homeless households
- The type of individuals and households becoming homeless
- Households in nightly paid accommodation & in-borough temporary accommodation
- Supply and Demand of Affordable housing - Housing Needs Register and social housing lettings
- Private rented housing & the Rent Deposit Scheme
- Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness
- The current Housing Options Service & existing homelessness prevention measures.

2.14 The key findings from the review are summarised in Appendix 2 and the full Review and the data used in the review in Appendix 1 to this report.

2.15 The data within the Homelessness Review will be updated, evaluated and monitored on a regular basis so we are able to predict future trends of homelessness, identify households at risk of homelessness and to inform new service improvements.

2.16 Vision & Summary of the Key Objectives over the next five years.

- 2.17 This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out how Epsom & Ewell Borough Council intends to meet the needs of our residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including rough sleeping and single people over the next five years. This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.
- 2.18 The strategy outlines the Council's strategic vision and the key objectives we aim to achieve when addressing homelessness within the borough. It sets out our commitment to preventing homelessness at an earlier stage and how we will work with our partners across all sectors to develop an integrated approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.
- 2.19 The Council's strategic vision is to see: *"The council and its partners working collaboratively to prevent homelessness, to proactively reduce and end rough sleeping, assist homeless households to find affordable housing solutions and ensure the right support is available to promote recovery and improve health and wellbeing."*
- 2.20 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has identified six key objectives for the next five years and these emphasise the importance of early intervention and prevention as promoted in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Each objective is supported by a number of actions to enable the priorities to be achieved.
- 2.21 These six key objectives are:-
1. The early identification, intervention & prevention of homelessness
 2. Reduce Rough Sleeping
 3. Increase accommodation options including social rented, private rented, supported and move on accommodation and in borough temporary accommodation
 4. Improve the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people
 5. Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people
 6. Partnership working

2.22 The Action Plan

- 2.23 Delivery of the Strategy is supported by this Action Plan, which is structured around the six key objectives. The Action Plan is attached as Appendix 3 to this report.
- 2.24 The Action Plan sets out the individual actions and activities to be undertaken and details how the Council will achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy.

- 2.25 The actions identified range from the operational and procedural in nature, to more strategic actions such as reviewing the planning policies related to provision of affordable housing, discussions with Homes England (the non-departmental public body that funds new affordable housing in England) as well as a review of all Council owned land for its suitability for bringing forward new affordable homes.
- 2.26 The Strategy and Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis through a multi-agency Homelessness Forum.

3 Public Consultation

- 3.1 The Council carried out six weeks consultation between 12 July and 23 August 2022 with a range of stakeholders, service users, staff and residents. These included: -
- Homeless applicants
 - Residents
 - Staff
 - Housing Association partners including Rosebery, Transform, Mount Green & PA
 - Epsom CAB
 - Epsom Foodbank
 - Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network
 - Adult Social Care, Children Services, Mental Health Service
 - Surrey Adults Matter/Bridge the Gap
 - Drug & Alcohol Services
 - Hospital Discharge Co-ordinator
 - Probation Service
 - North Surrey Domestic Abuse Service
 - DWP/Job Centre +
 - Surrey Life Long Learning Partnership/ETHOS
 - East Surrey Outreach Service
 - Local Faith groups
 - Various community & voluntary sector groups
- 3.2 The consultation took the form of an on-line questionnaire, focus groups and a Member's briefing.
- 3.3 The on-line questionnaire and accompanying strategy documents were emailed to the stakeholders listed above. In addition, 250 homeless applicants on the Housing Need Register were asked to participate. A paper version of the questionnaire was available on request.
- 3.4 The consultation was publicised on; the Council's website; Epsom & Ewell Homechoice; Members update and via social media and a press release.

- 3.17 **Key Objective 3 – Increase accommodation options within; Social Rented Housing; Private Rented Accommodation; Supported and move-on Accommodation and Temporary Accommodation within the borough:** 88% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed with this key objective.
- 3.18 **Key Objective 4 - Improve the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people:** 87.5% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed with the key objective of improving the health & wellbeing of homeless people.
- 3.19 **Key Objective 5 - Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people:** 94% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed with this key objective.
- 3.20 **Key Objective 6 - Partnership working:** 80% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed with the partnership working being a key objective.

3.21 The Action Plan

- 3.22 94% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed that the Action Plan is focused on the right actions and activities, and explained the work being undertaken across Epsom & Ewell to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.

3.23 Focus Group feedback

- 3.24 Three focus groups were held; one with Housing Services staff on 10 July 2022; one with Rosebery Housing Association on 7 September 2022 and another with the community & voluntary sector on 8 September 2022. A Member's briefing will be held on 24 November 2022.
- 3.25 The strategy and action plan were generally positively received. The focus group with Rosebery Housing Association gave the opportunity to look at common workstreams within the action plan so we could explore joint working to delivery these. The community and voluntary sector found the review data useful in understanding the pressures relating to homelessness in the borough.
- 3.26 Through the use of the Homelessness forum, we will continue to regularly engage with partners and service users during the 5-year life of the Strategy and Action plan.

4 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

- 4.1 Equality Impact Assessment

4.1.1 Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) have been completed on the strategy and action plan. The full assessment can be found as Appendix 5.

4.2 Crime & Disorder

4.2.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

4.3 Safeguarding

4.3.1 Meeting housing need, particularly for those who are vulnerable, will have a positive impact on safeguarding.

4.4 Dependencies

4.4.1 The ability of the council to continue provision of homelessness and rough sleeper support will be dependent on continued sufficient funding the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and other government funding opportunities.

4.4.2 In August 2022 DLUHC undertook a consultation on the future funding for the Homelessness Prevention Grant with the aim of determining new funding allocations formulas. This will apply to grant funding for 2023/24 onwards, with new allocations calculated and announced in late 2022.

4.5 Other

5 Financial Implications

5.1 The main source of external funding for our homelessness service comes to the council from the DLUHC in the form of the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG). The HPG for the Council in 2022/23 was £472,041. For 2023/24 onwards this will be subject to a new funding allocations formula.

5.2 In addition to HPG, the Council has successfully bid for additional DLUHC funding to support intervention for rough sleeping and move-on initiatives to reduce the risk of rough sleepers returning to sleeping on the streets.

5.3 The draft strategy and action plan, as set out in the appendices to this report, would seek to minimise future expenditure on the service by increasing the provision of additional accommodation, particularly reducing the reliance on expensive out of borough emergency nightly paid accommodation. Opportunities arising from future announcements from DLUHC for funding will be explored.

- 5.4 The Council has some capital funds and reserves that could be available for investment in initiatives aimed at reducing the costs of homelessness. Uncommitted S106 funds earmarked for affordable housing currently total £1.57 million, and the residential property fund has an uncommitted balance of £965k.

5.5 **Section 151 Officer's comments:**

- 5.6 Homelessness continues to be a challenge for the Council due to the numbers requiring support and the high costs of managing the service. The development of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan will assist in the Council's financial planning and management of the service.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 Under the Homelessness Act 2002 local authorities have a strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness. S.1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 (the Act) requires the Local Authority to have a strategy in place to prevent and deal with homelessness and rough sleeping aimed at preventing homelessness in the local authority area and ensure that sufficient room is available for people who are or may become homeless. It is a requirement of the Act that councils prepare a new Homelessness Strategy published every 5 years for their district.
- 6.2 The housing review and this strategy have been produced in accordance with the Homeless Acts 2002 and 2017 (and the accompanying code of guidance and related legislation).
- 6.3 **Legal Officer's comments:** Section 3(7A) of the Homelessness Act requires a local housing authority when formulating or modifying a homelessness strategy to have regard to (a) its current allocation scheme under section 166A of the Housing Act 1996 (b) its current tenancy strategy under section 150 of the Localism Act 2011, and in the case of an authority that is a London borough council, the current London housing strategy.

7 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 7.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

An Effective Council – effective provision of the Council's homelessness and rough sleeper service.

Safe and Well –Ensuring current housing need is identified and availability of suitable accommodation.

- 7.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

- 7.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None arising from this report
- 7.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** The strategy and action plan would have a positive impact on community safety.
- 7.5 **Partnerships:** Homelessness and the causes of homelessness requires a genuine partnership approach and the Council works with core agencies such as mental health, social service professionals, Housing Associations, Police and hospitals and the prison and probation service, as well as established and new landlords and estate agencies.

8 Background papers

- 8.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy - Community and Wellbeing Committee -17 March 2022

Other papers:

- Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities (DLUHC)

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

2022-2027

The Homelessness Review 2022

1. The Homelessness Review 2022 - Understanding homelessness in Epsom & Ewell

In developing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 to 2027 a detailed review of homelessness in Epsom & Ewell has been undertaken.

The purpose of the Homelessness Review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the area, identifying future trends and any gaps in the service currently being provided. The review has considered a range of information including:

- Number of homeless approaches
- Reasons for homelessness
- Homeless Prevention and Relief cases and outcomes
- Support needs of homeless households
- The type of individuals and households becoming homeless
- Households in nightly paid accommodation & in-borough temporary accommodation
- Supply and Demand of Affordable housing - Housing Needs Register and social housing lettings
- Private rented housing & the Rent Deposit Scheme
- Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness
- The current Housing Options Service & existing homelessness prevention measures

The data within the Homelessness Review will be updated, evaluated and monitored on a regular basis so we are able to predict future trends of homelessness, identify households at risk of homelessness and to inform new service improvements.

The Homelessness Review provides comprehensive information to develop the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 to 2027 and the Homelessness Review document should be read in conjunction with that strategy. A summary of the key findings of the Homelessness Review can be found in section 11.

The data set used to undertake this review was from information extracted from the Council's Abritas Housing System for the period 2018/19 up to quarter 3, 2021/22 and is based on Homelessness Case Level Collection data (H-CLIC).

The number of households approaching the Council's Housing Options Service for homeless assistance

The number of households approaching the Council for homeless assistance continues to increase. The complexity of problems presented by these people has also increased, (for example people with multiple and complex needs - mental health issues; physical health; substance misuse issues) as has the difficulty in finding ways to help them.

As shown in the table below, between April 2018 and December 2021 the Housing Option Service dealt with 1385 approaches for advice and assistance regarding homelessness.

Homeless Approaches & Outcomes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 Q1-3
Total number of homeless approaches	320	435	316	314
Early Advice given to resolve housing problem/ case closed (triage)	68	289	218	212
Number of homeless applications where homelessness was successfully prevented	20	49	64	33
Number of homeless applications where homelessness was successfully relieved	17	34	49	36
Number of homeless applications where the Council accepted a full homeless duty	6	54	30	52
Number of homeless applications where the Council did not have a full duty - not eligible/no local connection/ intentionally homeless	7	11	6	4
Number presenting at prevention stage	80	132	82	79
Number presenting at relief stage	84	153	144	101

The data includes the numbers of initial approaches that were resolved through the provision of early advice and guidance and so did not need to progress to a homelessness application.

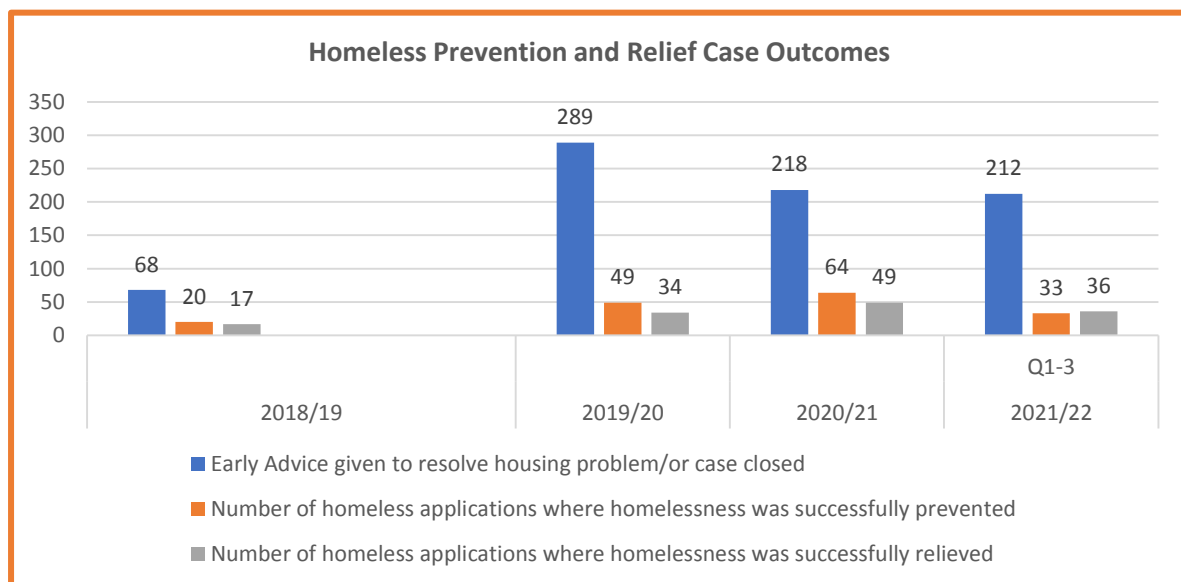
2. Homeless Prevention and Relief cases

Despite the rising demand, the Housing Options Team continues to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness. The number of cases where the Council has successfully prevented or relieved homelessness is outlined in the chart below.

The Homelessness Reduction Act requires local housing authorities to focus upon preventing or relieving homelessness.

Prevention duties include any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. This would involve activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation to prevent them from becoming homeless. Relief duties are owed to households that are already homeless and require help to secure alternative accommodation.

The Council is focused upon preventing or relieving homelessness at the earliest opportunity and in 2020 created a new Housing Options Preventions officer post. The success of this role can be seen in the number of cases that were resolved at the triage early advice stage since 2020.



Analysis of the approaches being made has shown that the majority of people who approach the Housing Options Service for assistance do so either before they are threatened with homelessness (at the triage stage) or within 56 days before becoming homeless (the prevention stage).

It is important to maintain this as the earlier people approach us for assistance, the more opportunity there is for us to prevent any homelessness occurring.

The statistics from this Homelessness Review indicate that single people are more likely to approach the Council when they are actually homeless (at the relief stage). This makes the task of resolving their housing difficulty harder and may mean that the Council has a duty to provide interim accommodation. A challenge for the Council therefore is to ensure that our services are targeted to ensure that all demographics/groups approach us for assistance at an earlier stage in their housing situation.

Early identification of problems, early targeted interventions and the provision of high-quality advice and assistance will ensure people have the best chance of staying in their home or obtaining alternative accommodation.

3. Reasons for Homelessness

People become homeless for many different reasons. There are social causes of homelessness, such as lack of affordable housing or private rented accommodation, as well as wider economic and social factors such as poverty & unemployment and life events that cause individuals to become homeless. For many, life events like a relationship breaking down, losing a job, mental or physical health problems, or substance misuse, can be the trigger. Being homeless can in turn make many of these problems even harder to resolve, especially without adequate or available support.

Changes of circumstances and removal of support systems can also lead to homelessness, such as release from prison, discharge from the armed forces, or coming out of the local authority care system.

In Epsom & Ewell and nationally the 3 main causes of homelessness are:

- Asked to leave by family and friends
- Termination of Assured Shorthold tenancies
- Domestic Abuse

The chart below indicates all the reasons for homeless approaches to the Council over the last 4 years since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2018.

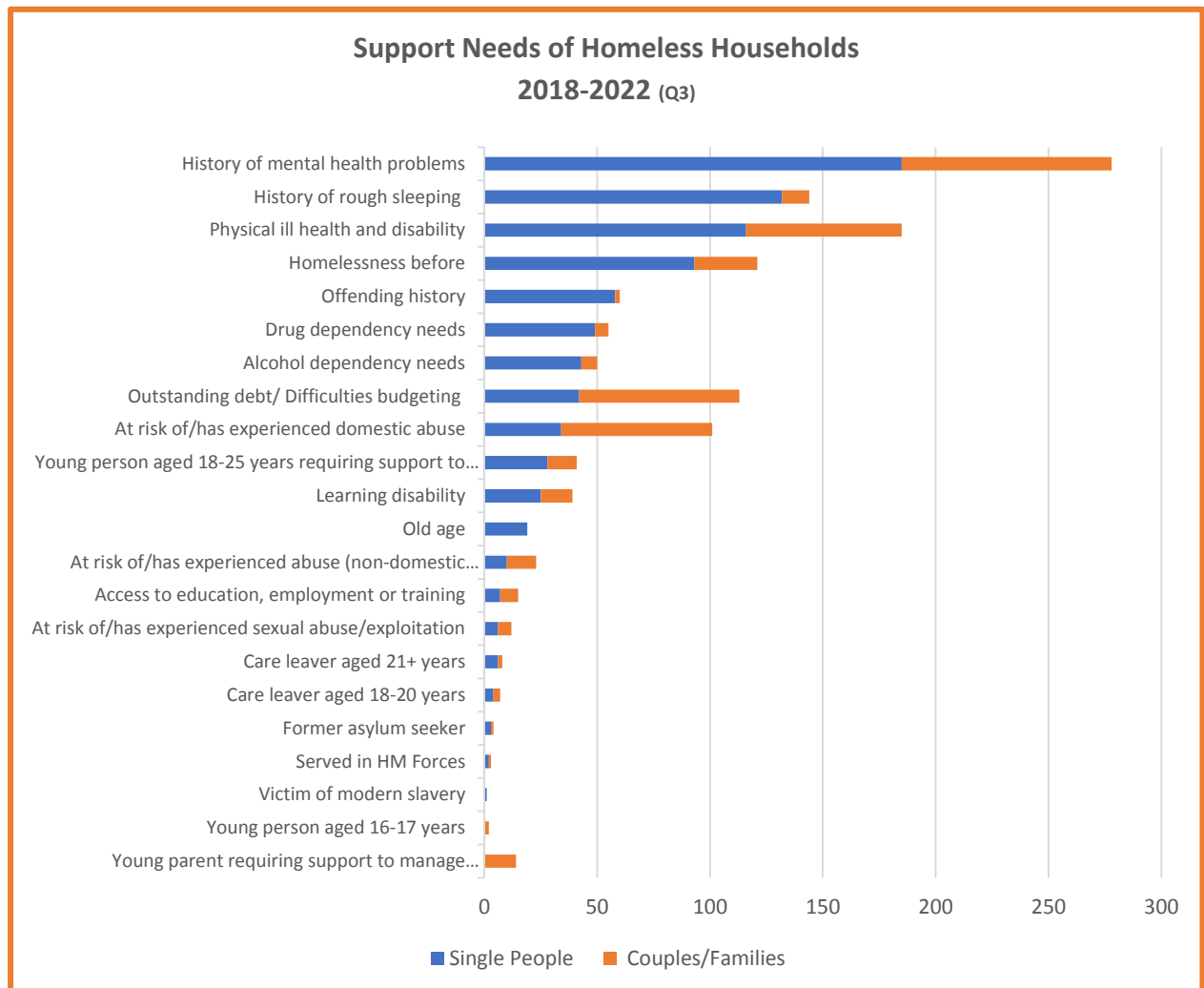
For 2020/21 & 2021/22 because of the Emergency Covid-19 legislation there was a ban on most forms of evictions, so for this period these figures are not representative. These restrictions were removed in October 2021 and cases are now starting to progress their way through the County Court system. It is anticipated that into 2022/23 a significantly higher number of people will approach the Council as homeless/threatened with homelessness from the private rented sector, many of whom would not have previously needed to use the service before.

Reasons for Homelessness	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 Q1-3
Family no longer willing or able to accommodate	64	79	83	48
Friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	19	13	8	11
End of private rented tenancy - assured shorthold tenancy	52	83	29	41
Domestic Abuse	31	26	21	18
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent breakdown)	5	21	22	6
Non-racially motivated / other motivated violence or harassment	5	4	5	8
End of private rented tenancy - not assured shorthold tenancy	5	3	2	5
End of social rented tenancy	5	3	4	2
Eviction from supported housing	2	4	2	1
Fire or flood /other emergency	1	2	1	4
Left institution with no accommodation available	2	1	1	1
Left HM Forces		1	1	3
Mortgage repossession	3	2		
Property disrepair	2	2	1	
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support		2	1	1
Domestic abuse - alleged perpetrator excluded from property				1
Racially motivated violence or harassment		1		
Other	41	71	55	36
Early Advice given to resolve case/or case closed	83	117	79	128

4. Support needs of homeless applicants

Data, collected as part of the new Homeless Reduction Act requirements have given a much more detailed picture of the support needs of clients. The data for Epsom & Ewell shows that the most prevailing support need for all clients was with their mental health. Amongst the single homeless population, the most prevailing support needs were; mental health; a history of rough sleeping; physical ill health/disability; offending; and drug & alcohol dependency. For the other households, including those with children, was debt/budgeting; physical ill health/disability; and domestic abuse.

The information collected in the charts below has been separated out into the support needs of the single homeless population and then other households including those with children.



5. Demographics of homeless households

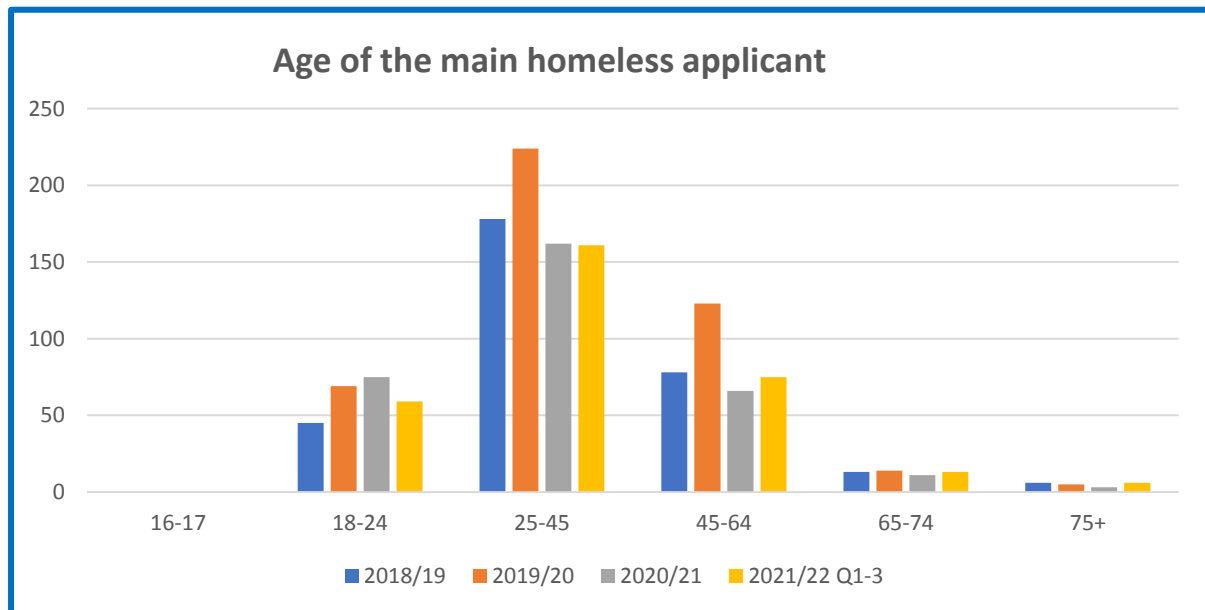
The following charts provide indicative figures demonstrating the demography of households approaching the Council. They do not cover a complete data set for the Housing Service and only include data for ethnicity, age and household composition.

Household composition

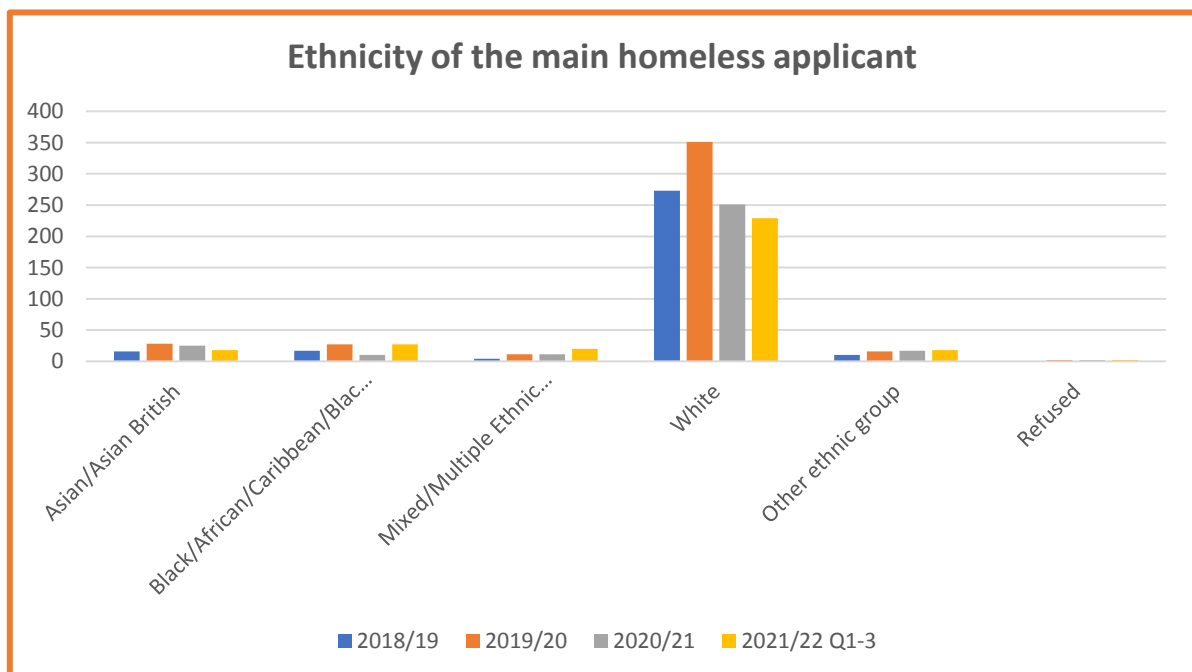
The chart below provides a breakdown by household composition and shows that consistently over the last 4 years single homeless people have account for over 50% of the Council's homeless approaches. 39.6% are from families with dependent children or who are pregnant.

Household Composition	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 Q1-3
Single Person households	132	231	176	162
Households with dependent children/ or pregnant	146	166	119	118
Couples/Households with non- dependant adult children / other	42	38	22	34

The chart below demonstrates the age range in terms of people approaching for advice and assistance over the past 4 financial years.



The table below demonstrates the ethnic origin of the main homeless applicant approaching the Housing Options Service over the past 4 years. The ethnic origin of homeless households appears to largely reflect the demography of the borough.



6. Homeless households in temporary accommodation and nightly paid interim/temporary accommodation

The duty to provide interim/temporary accommodation is triggered when there is a reason to believe a household may be eligible for assistance, homeless and in priority need. As at December 2021 there were a total of 235 households accommodated by the Council in either in-borough temporary accommodation (155) or nightly paid accommodation (80). Of these, 161 households had dependent children, with a total of 302 children.

Nightly paid interim/temporary accommodation

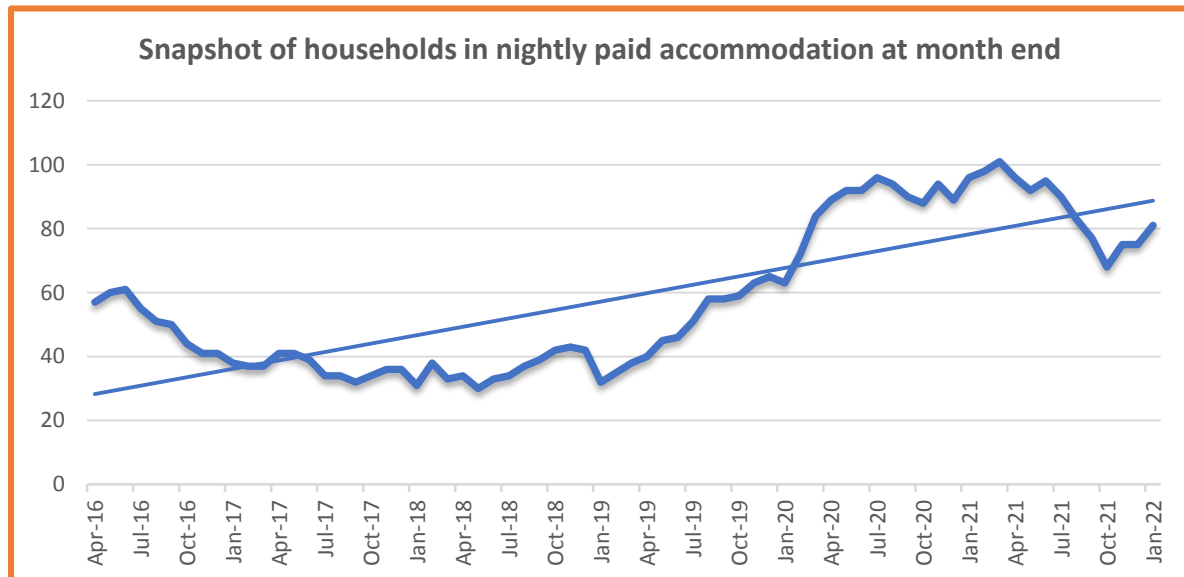
Nightly paid accommodation is only used in an emergency and then when there is no other interim or temporary accommodation available.

Due to the lack of availability of temporary accommodation within the borough interim/temporary accommodation is most likely to be privately-owned nightly paid accommodation located out of borough in areas such as Thornton Heath, Croydon, Wandsworth or Horley. Nightly paid accommodation could be a room in a hotel, a room in shared accommodation or a self-contained unit/property.

Self-contained properties are generally used for families with children & pregnant women. Nightly paid accommodation with shared use of bathroom and or cooking facilities may be used for single people, however most single people would also be offered a self-contained bedsit with cooking facilities and en-suite bathroom.

The use of this type of accommodation and where it is located out of borough may result in households experiencing difficulties in getting to their place of employment, their support networks, including GP and other health providers and getting their children to school.

The chart below shows a snapshot of the number of households in nightly paid accommodation at month end since 2016. As this is a snapshot within any given month there will also be a number of households being place in and moved out of nightly paid accommodation.

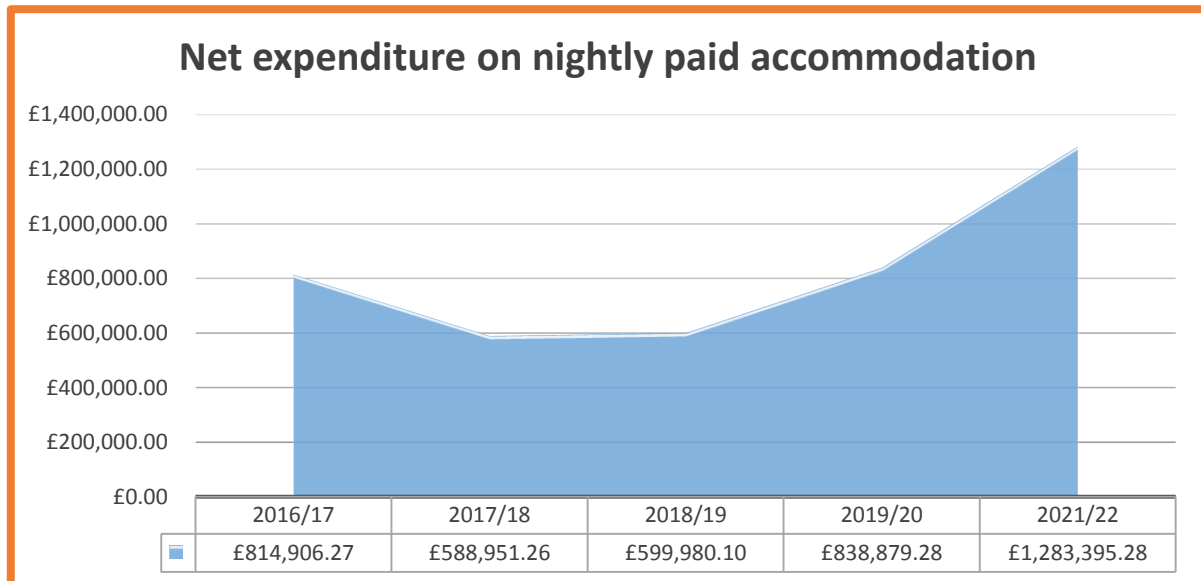


The biggest increase in demand for temporary accommodation is from single adults with multiple and complex needs. Often it is very difficult to find a housing solution for these households as Housing Association and private landlords are reluctant to accept them without adequate support. The majority of single adult households in temporary accommodation are placed in privately owned nightly paid accommodation outside of the borough. This demonstrates a need for the Council to secure more supported accommodation provision for this client group.

Costs of temporary accommodation

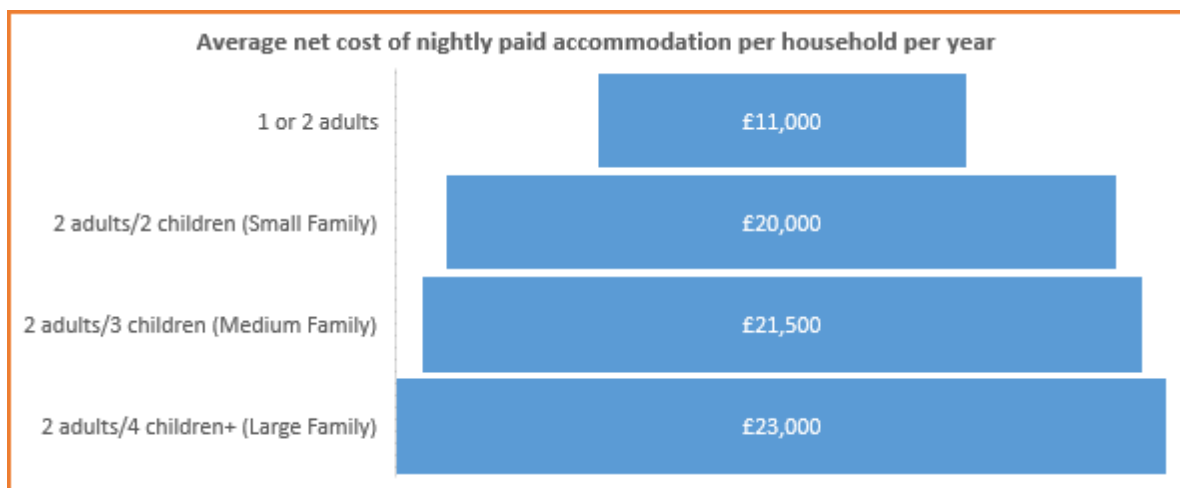
The use of this nightly paid accommodation is expensive and the Council's net spending on providing nightly paid temporary accommodation has increased over the past 5 years as a result in the increase in homelessness.

The charts below shows the Council's net expenditure on nightly paid accommodation since 2016/17.



This is also the case nationally. Figures released by the then Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (now DLUHC) show there were 96,060 households in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2021. This was a 1.5% increase on the number a year previously and is part of a long-term increase. Analysis of expenditure by local authorities over 2020/21 reportedly showed Councils spent at least £1.4 billion on temporary accommodation

The chart below shows the average net cost to the Council of nightly paid accommodation per year broken down into different size households.



Temporary Accommodation costs have traditionally been paid from local government budgets. Housing Benefit assistance has remained capped at 90% of the January 2011 Local Housing Allowance Rate. On 1 April 2017, the removal of the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee Subsidy from the Housing Benefit subsidy saw an additional financial burden transferred from central government to local government budgets. To assist with this, from 2017, the loss of this subsidy was replaced by the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (now called Homeless Prevention Grant (HPG)). However, there is no guarantee that this annual grant

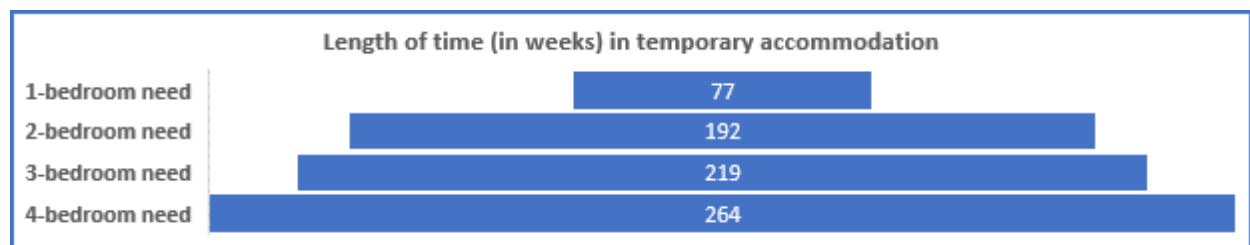
This all increases the provision of good quality temporary accommodation within the borough so that households are able to maintain their support and social networks and reduce any disruption with getting to their place of employment and their children to school.

Length of time in temporary accommodation

It is recognised that it can take a long time for some households to move on from temporary accommodation. This is especially the case for households with dependent children. The average time a homeless household with children spends in temporary accommodation is 225 weeks or 4.3 years. It should be noted that whilst homeless households are in accommodation that is assessed as suitable many are often in accommodation that has a bedroom less than their assessed need.

The table below shows the average length of time (in weeks) a homeless household is likely to be in temporary accommodation before being offered permanent/settled social housing.

1-bedroom need	2-bedroom need	3-bedroom need	4-bedroom need
77 weeks	192 weeks	219 weeks	264 weeks



This figure is increasing, and the time spent by a household in temporary accommodation is affected by the following:

- The limited supply of affordable social housing to move on to so the Council can end/ discharge its homeless duty.
- Limited availability of affordable private rented accommodation
- The increased duty to provide temporary accommodation for some households for 56 days under the new Relief Duty introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- The time taken to investigate the homeless application and the decision on any housing duty that may or may not arise
- any rent arrears or housing related debt or history of antisocial behaviour delaying the household's further rehousing

The length of time households spend in in-borough temporary accommodation will significantly impact on other households placed in nightly paid accommodation and the costs associated with this. Due to the lack of larger sized temporary accommodation, larger families who need 3-bedroom plus properties are likely to spend a significant time in-nightly paid accommodation unless private rent accommodation can be found.

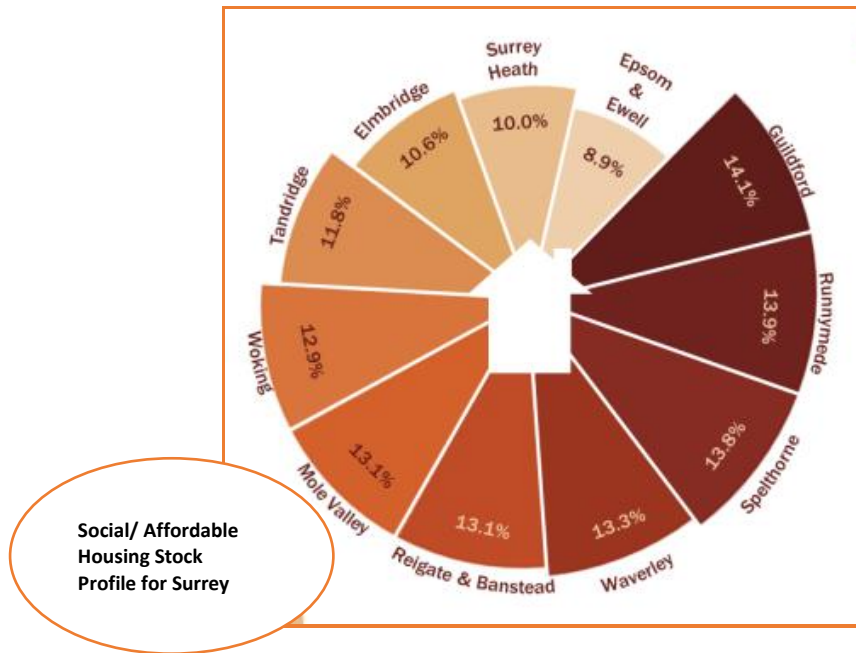
7. Supply and Demand of Affordable housing

Demand - The Housing Needs Register

The Council is no longer a stock holding local authority, following the voluntary transfer of its housing to Rosebery Housing Association in 1994. Social housing is provided by a number of different housing associations and the Council will have nomination rights to a percentage of these housing association's vacancies.

There are approximately 2600 social housing properties in Epsom and Ewell. The percentage of social housing is at 8.07% and this is significantly lower than other areas in Surrey, such as Guildford which is 14.1%.

The chart below compares the percentage of social/affordable housing properties within Surrey.



The Council maintains a register of households in need of social housing, with their priority assessed using a banding system as set out in the Council's Housing Allocation Policy. The Council is legally required to give certain categories of Housing Needs Register applications a reasonable preference, and homeless households are one of these categories.

A banding scheme ranks together applicants with different but equal housing need. Applicants will be placed in one of five bands ranging from A (urgent need) to E (lowest), which reflects their assessed housing need as set out in the Council's Housing Allocation Policy.

The Housing Allocation Policy must balance a number of competing demands for housing. The Housing Needs Register is composed of Waiting list, Transfer and Homeless households and of different household groups including single people, couples, elderly persons, and families with children. Households are registered for accommodation in accordance with the Councils 'Bedroom Standard' based on their household size and type.

The Council operates a choice-based lettings (CBL) system where vacant housing association properties are advertised in a weekly cycle on Epsom & Ewell Home Choice website and registered applicants can 'bid' or show an interest in those that are suitable for their housing need. From a shortlist of those who have indicated an interest, the applicant in greatest assessed housing need in accordance with the Council's Housing Allocation policy is then nominated to the housing association as a prospective tenant.

The vast majority of social housing properties available in the borough are now let on Affordable Rents and fixed term tenancies, rather than Social Rents. Affordable Rent properties have their rents set at a level of up to 80% of the market rent. These will be at a similar level to most private sector housing rents or the LHA rate. Households that are benefit capped will struggle to afford social housing that is let on Affordable Rent and this may rule out some homeless households being considered for these properties.

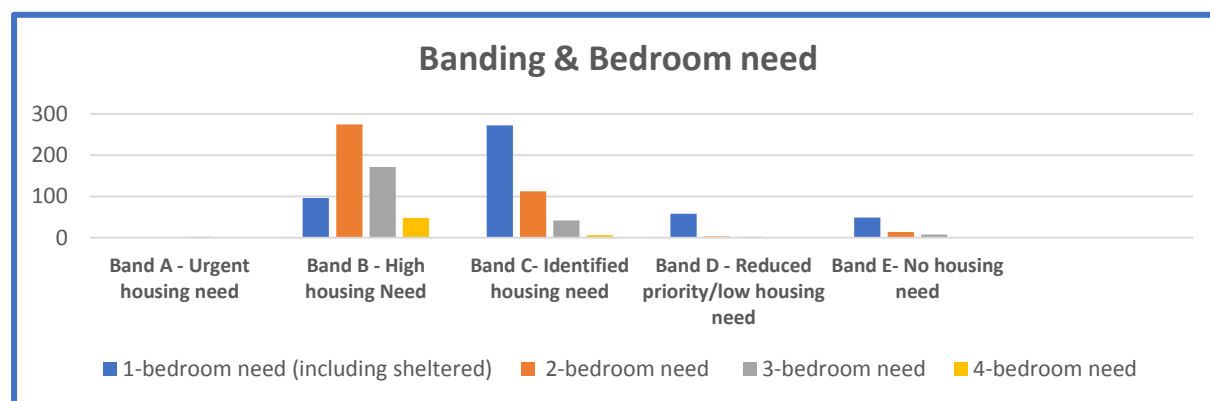
Social landlords are increasingly requesting prospective tenants to pay rent in advance and are carrying out affordable assessments before they will accept new tenants. This can sometimes mean that non-working households, or those in receipt of a low wage, may not meet the affordability criteria set by some landlords. This is particularly the case for those that are affected by the benefit cap.

The Housing Needs Register provides a good reflection of the current housing need within the borough. As at February 2022 there were 1159 housing applicants on the Council's Housing Needs Register and they were placed in the following Bands A - E of housing need and identified as requiring the following sized accommodation.

The table & chart below shows a breakdown of all registered applicants on the Housing Needs Register and the corresponding registered bedroom size and assessed banding:

Size of property required	1-bedroom need (including sheltered)	2-bedroom need	3-bedroom need	4-bedroom need	Total
Banding Need					
Band A - Urgent housing need	0	0	2	1	3
Band B - High housing Need	96	274	171	48	589
Band C- Identified housing need	272	112	42	6	432
Band D - Reduced priority/low housing need	58	3	2	0	63
Band E - No housing need	49	14	8	1	72
Total	475	403	225	56*	1159

*Of which 11 need a 5-7 bedroom property



Single people and couples requiring 1 bedroom accommodation account for 40% of those on the Housing Needs Register, and families requiring 2 bedrooms make up 34.7%. However, households requiring 3 or 4+ bedroom accommodation will have the longest wait due to the very limited supply of this size accommodation. 51% of all applicants on the Housing Needs Register have been assessed as having an Urgent or High housing need.

Making the best use of existing housing stock is an important element of meeting housing need. To encourage households, downsizers are placed in Band B, our main priority band, freeing up family sized homes for others.

The need for support housing for single homeless households is discussed section 10.

Housing Allocations & Supply

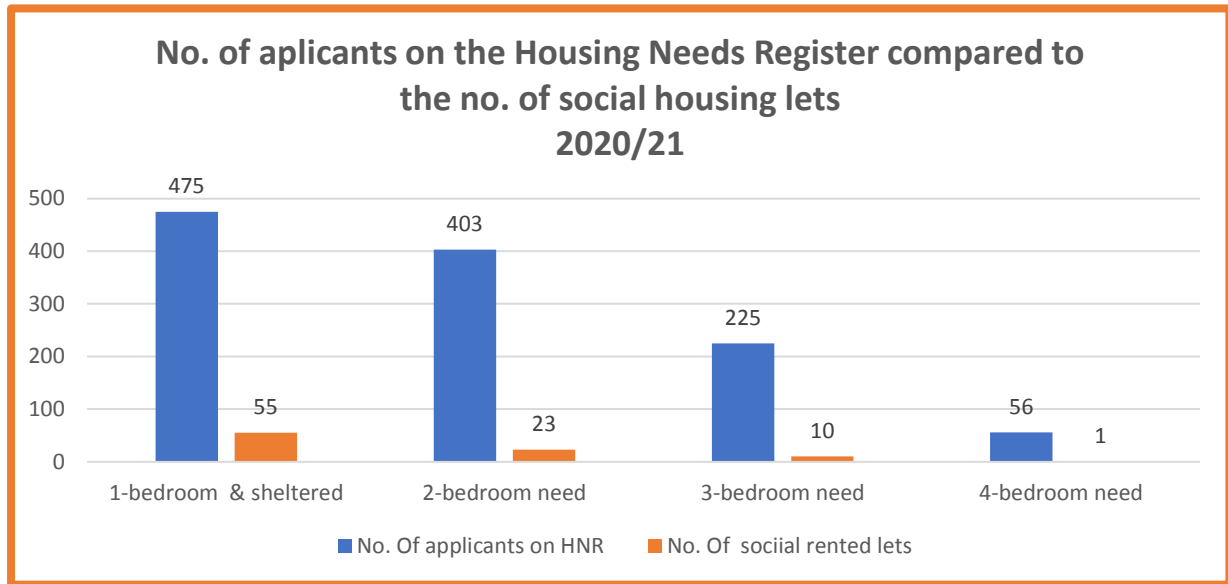
The high demand for and the very low supply of social rented housing is a major contributing factor of homelessness in the borough, especially for family sized accommodation. This is compounded as there are lower levels of social housing in the borough (8.07%), low numbers of properties becoming available for letting and a limited number of new build social rented properties being developed.

The table below gives information regarding the number and size of general needs social rent housing vacancies allocated over the last 7 years. A large proportion of these properties will be flats rather houses.

Property Size/Year	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3-Bedroom	4-Bedroom	Sheltered	Total
2015/16	16	34	10	1	18	79
2016/17	30	31	25	5	23	114
2017/18	18	21	11	1	27	78
2018/19	35	39	21	8	24	127
2019/20	34	22	14	1	10	81
2020/21	29	23	10	1	26	89
2021/22 Q1-Q3	28	25	10	1	6	70

The 2019 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) estimated that the overall net annual need for affordable housing is 349 units per annum. In terms of size, the largest categories of net need are for two-bedroomed units (45% of net need), and three-bedroomed units (29% of net need). The need for units with four or more bedrooms is lower (20%) but much higher than the proportion of all affordable stock of this size, therefore the wait is significantly longer.

However, in each of the last 3 years the actual number of social rented properties that became available was less than 90 pa. Over 50 % of the vacancies were 1-bedroom and sheltered properties, not family sized accommodation. The chart below gives a comparison of the number of applicants on the Housing Needs Register compared to the number of social housing lets for 2020/21.



This impacts both on homeless households but also other applicants on the Housing Needs Register in housing need. 51% of whom have been assessed as having an Urgent or High housing need.

For homeless households it means there are more households living in temporary accommodation and they will spend significantly longer in that temporary accommodation before they will be made an offer of social housing. The length of time homeless households spend in in-borough temporary accommodation will significantly impact on other households placed in nightly paid accommodation, how long they will be placed out of borough and the costs to the Council associated with this.

It is very clear that the demand for social housing completely outweighs the supply and this housing option can no longer be relied upon by homeless households, however it can be equally difficult for these households to access private rented accommodation.

8. Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector plays a vital role in the Council's strategy to prevent and relieve homelessness; from preventing homelessness from this tenure by mediation, and negotiations with landlords and tenants, through to rehoming households into the sector.

However, many of our clients are reluctant to consider this as a housing option, seeing it as having less security of tenure and unaffordable.

In addition, a buoyant rental market, high rent levels against restricted Housing Benefit/Universal Credit Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates means that securing private rented accommodation within borough and across Surrey is increasingly difficult and unaffordable for households on low incomes or benefits.

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate is the maximum amount of assistance that households may receive towards their rent whilst in receipt of Housing Benefit /Universal Credit. This could be reduced for households affected by the Household Benefit Cap of £500 per week for out of work claimants. Households that are

benefit capped struggle to find any form of housing within the borough that is affordable, rental and even in some cases, social housing let on Affordable Rent.

The table below shows rental market data per calendar month (pcm) for Epsom in February 2022 and demonstrates the disparity between median market rents and LHA levels in the borough.

Property size	Median Market Rent (pcm)	Local Housing Allowance Rate (pcm)	Shortfall between the Median Market Rent & LHA (pcm)
1-room in a shared property	£725	£450	£275
1-bedroom – Epsom	£1110	£875	£235
2-bedroom – Epsom	£1350	£1100	£240
3-bedroom – Epsom	£1600	£1375	£225
4-bedroom – Epsom	£2550	£1735	£815

The median market rental price for a 2-bedroom property in the area is £1350 per calendar month, this is £240 pcm above the 2-bedroom Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate for the area. For 4-bedroom properties this shortfall rises to £815 pcm. Any shortfall between the market rent and LHA would need to be met from an applicant's existing benefits. Any accommodation the Council arranges or provides to meet its homeless duties must be considered affordable.

In addition to the issue of market rents there is also the issue of low supply and high demand especially from working professionals. An online search for rental properties in Epsom & Ewell generated a list of only 22 2-bedroom properties and only 6, 3-bedroom properties available on the market to rent. The average rent of the 2-bedroom properties was £2069 pcm and for the 3-bedroom it was £2180 pcm. Only 1 property was within the LHA rate. This snapshot undertaken in February 2022 highlights how extremely difficult it is to locate affordable private rented housing for those in need.

Many landlords are very reluctant to accept households in receipt of benefits as tenants. Landlords require high initial upfront payments for rent in advance, deposit and fees but the largest barrier to accessing housing is when a landlord requires a guarantor. Most guarantors are expected to earn at least 30 x the monthly rent per year or be a homeowner. Recently Agents have also started to request sealed bids for private rented properties. The situation is further exacerbated for households with debts or a history of rent arrears.

Although the Council operates a Rent Deposit Scheme to support low-income households with deposit or bonds and rent in advance, with these type of market conditions a cycle of generational homelessness within families will continue for those households who do not have parents or other family members to assist them into rented accommodation.

It should also be noted that the ending of a private rented assured shorthold tenancy has consistently been one of the highest reasons for homelessness within the borough and we are therefore aware that we need to target tenancy sustainment to reduce the number of households becoming homeless, although sustaining tenancies is becoming more complicated.

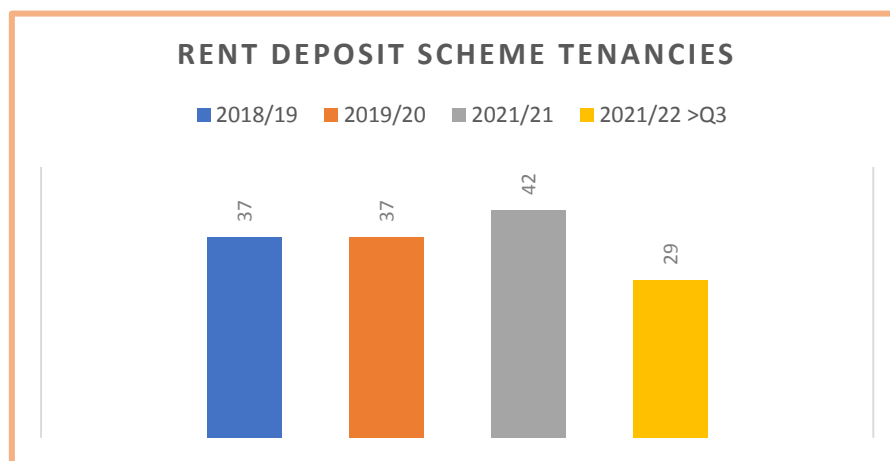
Although accessing and sustaining accommodation within the private rented sector is a challenge, in the absence of social housing, it is the main option we have in preventing or resolving a housing situation.

Rent Deposit Scheme

One of the Council's main prevention measures is the Rent Deposit scheme. The Rent Deposit Scheme is where the Council assists people threatened with homelessness with a deposit, bond or rent in advance loan to help them rent a property in the private rented sector. The Rent Deposit Officer will liaise with private landlords or agents, assist with setting up the tenancy, organise the bond or deposit and will provide on-going tenancy sustainment to the landlord and tenant.

Since 2018, 145 homeless prevention tenancies have been set up via Rent Deposit Scheme

The chart below shows the number of homeless prevention tenancies set up through the Rent Deposit Scheme for both families and single people since 2018.



9. Rough Sleeping and single homelessness

Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness.

Rough sleeping includes people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). It also includes those in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, derelict boats, stations etc)

There are also homeless people who are not rough sleeping but do not have a settled address.

These households are described as hidden homeless and are sometimes referred to as “sofa surfers”. Hidden homelessness includes those who are sofa-surfing, staying with relatives or friends on a very short-term basis or who need to move because they are living in insecure or overcrowded circumstances.

This “hidden homelessness” is significantly more prevalent than rough sleeping, but due to its nature is difficult to quantify and there is no reliable data on people who live this way however, numbers are thought to have increased significantly. Covid-19 “Everyone-In” exposed the issue of hidden single homelessness within the borough and we accommodated over 60 non-priority need people who were either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.

The Council has experienced an increase in rough sleeping and single homelessness over the last few years. In November each year, the Council, along with the other Surrey districts and boroughs, undertakes an annual rough sleeper street count and the table below shows the reported figures since 2018. In addition, during the Pandemic the Council has been required to provide the DLUHC with a monthly Rough Sleeper survey and in January 2022 6 rough sleepers were reported.

DLUHC Annual Rough Sleeper Count	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	6	5	3	4

Where these counts give a snapshot of rough sleeping in the borough on a given night this does not represent a true reflection for the rest of the year. In addition, from March 2020 onwards, these figures should read in the context of the Everyone-In initiative.

During 2019/20 of the 424 homeless approaches, 231 were from single people, of which 45 had a history of rough sleeping as an identified support need. In 2020/21 of the 316 homeless approaches, 176 were single people, of which 31 were identified as having a history of rough sleeping as a support need.

Consistently over the last 4 years single homeless people have accounted for over 50% of the single homeless approaches. Whilst the Council would have a duty to provide advice and assistance to help resolve their housing difficulty, for most of these people the Council would not have a duty to provide any emergency accommodation.

Having a history of rough sleeping was the 2nd most identified support need for single homeless people. Our experience is many of those sleeping rough or with a history of rough sleeping have multiple and complex needs with the predominant factors being poor mental health and substance misuse. Other characteristics are offending, low self-esteem, unemployment, chaotic behaviour, and some are difficult to engage.

Statistical Information on single homelessness and rough sleeping in Epsom & Ewell								
Year	Homelessness approaches	Of which single person	Of which were found not to be in priority need	Identified Support Need				
				Former/current rough sleeper	Mental Health	History of Offending	Drug Dependency Issues	Alcohol Dependency issues
2019/20	434	231	217	45	64	16	17	16
2020/21	316	176	159	31	33	17	13	8
2021/22 >Qtr 3	314	162	124	18	37	8	5	2

Rough sleeping and the cost to the public purse is significant. Research (by the DCLG in 2015) suggested that each rough sleeper costs between £16,000 to £21,000 per annum compared to the average cost of an adult at £4,600 per annum.

Housing options for rough sleepers and single homeless people with support needs

Within the borough there is a limited supply of low-level supported accommodation with a total of 44 bed spaces. Vacancies occur infrequently and the Council does not have exclusive nomination rights to all these units. These providers are unable to take clients with more complex needs and there is a significant lack of medium-high level supported accommodation for rough sleepers/single homeless people with multiple and complex needs.

There is a reluctance for general needs housing providers to accept nominations for rough sleepers/single homeless who have multiple and complex needs without the required support package or a proven history of maintaining a tenancy. Therefore, whilst in 2020/21 the Council received 29, 1- bedroom general needs housing association vacancies most of these would not have been suitable for this client group. This is often the same for temporary accommodation within the borough as the needs are considered too high.

There are also significant barriers for single people being able to access private rented accommodation, this includes landlords unwilling to take tenants in receipt of welfare benefits, under 35 single room LHA rate, shortfall between market rents levels and the LHA rate and the requirement for rent guarantors.

Therefore, this cohort remains in interim/emergency accommodation, often out of area, while work is undertaken to try to find appropriate supported accommodation. There is no specialist Mental Health provision for rough sleepers and Adult Social Care thresholds for medium/higher needs rough sleepers/single homeless are too high and they are not considered eligible for care & support. Consequently, Housing Services officers are left to manage people with multiple and complex needs without the support of other statutory agencies and often these placements will breakdown due to ASB or lack of appropriate support.

Support for Rough Sleepers

East Surrey Outreach Support (eSOS)

In order to support rough sleepers and single homeless people the Council commissions and funds the East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS).

(eSOS) is an assertive outreach service for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping operated by Thames Reach and covers Reigate & Banstead, Mole Valley, Tandridge and Epsom & Ewell. As both an outreach and preventative service, eSOS helps people to escape the streets and provides support to people in at risk of losing their home, or those who are living in precarious situations such as sofa surfing, helping them

to find more secure accommodation. eSOS offers: one-to-one assessments and support; in-home resettlement or support plans; referrals to hostels and supported housing; support to help rough sleepers engage with services such as health, mental health, drug/alcohol or probation services and work with homeless people with complex needs to break the cycle of rough sleeping.

Through the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funded eSOS Navigator role we are also able to provide assessment beds so eSOS are able to undertake assessments and work with rough sleepers.

Streetlink

The public can alert the Council and eSOS to the presence of a rough sleeper through the www.streetlink.org.uk. An outreach worker will aim to meet with the rough sleeper as soon as they are able.

Rent Deposit Scheme for single homeless people

The Council's Rent Deposit Scheme can assist some single homeless people to find and secure private rented accommodation. However, we are only able to facilitate access to the private rented sector for clients if we are satisfied that they are able to sustain a tenancy.

Floating Support Service

The Parashoot East Surrey Floating Support Service provides support for people who are at immediate risk of losing their home, who are homeless or need help settling into a new home. The service is funded by Surrey County Council Housing Related Support.

SWEP

Although there is no statutory duty to do so, Local authorities are encouraged to offer Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) services to provide protection for people who are sleeping rough during particularly cold or inclement weather. The Council follows the guidance provided by Homeless Link and all rough sleepers can access accommodation when feels like temperatures drop below freezing for 3 consecutive nights.

Cold Weather Fund

Winter 2020/21 the Council also implemented the Cold Weather Fund (MHCLG funding) which enabled rough sleepers to be accommodated during the winter months beyond the provisions of SWEP to enable services to work with rough sleepers to provide support and assistance to them to move on to more settled accommodation.

Begging

The borough has also seen an increase in begging in Epsom town centre over the last few years although this has been sporadic and not continuous. Much of this begging is organised and not always related to homeless people. A joint approach by the Council and the police was undertaken to stop begging that was considered opportunist and organised. Attempts to engage with those individuals who truly needed assistance with their housing have continued.

New Initiatives

As part of the "Everyone-In" Next steps (NSAP) funding the Council employed a dedicated Single Person Homeless Support Officer on a one-year fixed term contract. This contract ended in February 2022, however the Council has applied for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding to extend this post for a further 3 years. We are currently waiting on the outcome of this bid.

The Council received Government funding under the Homes England 'Move-On' fund in 2020/21 to enable two units of self-contained accommodation to be purchased to increase the availability of self-contained units. Working in conjunction with our Partner Transform Housing, the completion of these units is due in March 2022 and are being made available to provide move-on accommodation for single homeless people with a history of rough sleeping.

In September 2021 the Council bid for and was awarded Rough Sleeper Accommodation Project (2021-23) funding and we are working with Transform Housing & Support to purchase 2 properties which will provide support accommodation on the Housing First model for rough sleepers with more complex needs.

The Housing Options team has recently started work with the charity Hope into Action who have purchased a 4-bedroom property in Epsom for vulnerable adults/single homeless people who need low level supported housing

Surrey Homeless MAG

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on homeless people in Surrey, the Homeless Multi-Agency Group (MAG) was established to support the work happening in districts and boroughs in the county. This includes representation from housing, health, primary care, mental health, substance misuse, public health and criminal justice. While its initial focus has been the safe response to housing those who were homeless at the time of the outbreak, it is now established longer-term to work with local districts/boroughs to improve the multi-agency approach for homeless people in Surrey.

10. The Current Housing Options Service, existing homelessness prevention measures

Successfully preventing and relieving homelessness has always been and remains the main aim and focus of the Council's Housing Options Service.

Prevention actions include any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. This would involve activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation to prevent them from becoming homeless. Relief duties are owed to households that are already homeless and require help to secure alternative accommodation.

This can take the form of advice and information, mediation services; proactive interventions, such as negotiating with landlords to enable people to retain their tenancies; assistance with debt; and targeted services at known risk points, such as those leaving care, hospital, prison or the armed forces.

The Council's provision of a high-quality Housing Options Service ensures there are a wide range of prevention measures, initiatives, and interventions available to tackle homelessness.

In order to map out existing services for the review, outlined below are some of the measures the Housing Options Service use to prevent and relieve homelessness: -

- All applicants will have a personalised Housing Options Interview. The Housing Options interviews will explore a full range of options with a person, carry out an assessment with the person to look into the circumstances that caused them to become homeless or threatened with homelessness and to establish their housing and support needs. A Personalised Housing Plan will then be agreed which will set out the actions (or 'reasonable steps') to be taken by the Council and the person to help them remain in their current accommodation or to find alternative accommodation.
- Case work interventions such as negotiations with landlords or parents to resolve behavioural or arrears problems to retain their accommodation.
- Pathway referrals to other housing providers, such as Transform Housing & Support; domestic abuse refuges; Forward Trust.
- Pathway referrals to appropriate support services (drug/alcohol, mental health, young persons, domestic abuse, ex-offenders, money advice, employment support, floating support, foodbank, CAB).
- The Rent Deposit Scheme assists homeless households to find and secure private rented accommodation and can help financially with deposits, bonds or rent in advance loans. The Rent Deposit Officer will liaise with private landlords or agents, assist with setting up the tenancy, organise the bond or cash deposit and will provide on-going tenancy sustainment to the landlord and tenant.
- Parashoot East Surrey Floating Support Service provides support for people who are at immediate risk of losing their home, who are homeless or need help settling into a new home.
- In order to support rough sleepers and single homeless people the Council commissions and funds the East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS). (eSOS) is an assertive outreach service for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping operated by Thames Reach. Further information on this service can be found in section 9.

- Council commissions and funds the Employment, Training and Housing Options Service. The project is provided by Surrey Life Long Learning Partnership and it provides employment advice, CV writing, job clubs and basic numeracy, literacy, and digital skills. This is an important service to help people improve their incomes and pay their housing costs.
- Homelessness Prevention Fund - The Council adopts a 'spend to save' policy and the homelessness prevention fund is a part of this. This is funding available to assist clients with ad hoc situations that arise, which may be resolved through some small financial input. Where possible any monies spent from the fund are recouped through a repayment scheme with the client.
- Housing Options Officers will attend MARAC, MAPPA and CHARM monthly meetings.
- Domestic Abuse Sanctuary Scheme - Through a joint-working arrangement with the North Surrey Domestic Outreach Service, the Crime Reduction Officer and Rosebery Housing Association the Council facilitates a Sanctuary Scheme for survivors of domestic abuse so they are able to stay safely in their homes.
- Surrey Mobility Scheme – The Council has joint working arrangements with the other local authorities in Surrey under the Surrey Mobility Scheme, to assist survivors of domestic abuse to move within the county through reciprocal arrangements.

11. What the Homelessness Review is telling us - Key findings, local trends, and challenges

Key Findings

- Homeless approaches to the Housing Options Service have significantly increased since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act and forecasting predictions show that this increase is likely to continue. Between April 2018 and December 2021, the Housing Option Service dealt with 1385 approaches for advice and assistance regarding homelessness.
- Despite the rising demand, the Housing Options Team continues to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness, with a total 1089 cases since 2018.
- The majority of people who approach the Housing Options Service for assistance do so either before they are threatened with homelessness (at the triage stage) or within 56 days before becoming homeless (the prevention stage). However, this is not the case for single people who are more likely to approach the Council when they are actually homeless (at the relief stage).
- The 3 main causes of homelessness are:
 - Asked to leave by family and friends
 - Termination of Assured Shorthold tenancies
 - Domestic Abuse
- 75% of homeless applicants said they had additional support needs. The most prevailing support need for all clients was with their mental health. Amongst the single homeless population the most prevailing support needs were; mental health; a history of rough sleeping; physical ill health/disability; offending; and drug & alcohol dependency. For the other households, including those with children, this was debt/budgeting; physical ill health/disability; and domestic abuse.
- The ethnic origin of homeless households appears to largely reflect the demography of the borough.
- In December 2021 there were a total of 235 homeless households accommodated by the Council in either in-borough temporary accommodation (155) or nightly paid accommodation (80). Of these, 161 households had dependent children, with a total of 302 children.
- The average time a homeless household with children spends in temporary accommodation is 225 weeks or 4.3 years before being offered permanent/settled social housing. This is increasing.

- There are approximately 2600 social housing properties in Epsom and Ewell. The percentage of social housing is at 8.07% and this is significantly lower than other areas in Surrey, such as Guildford which is 14.1%.
- In February 2022 there were 1159 housing applicants on the Council's Housing Needs Register.
- 51% of all applicants on the Housing Needs register have been assessed as having an Urgent or High housing need.
- The 2019 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) estimated that the overall net annual need for affordable housing is 349 units per annum.
- Less than 90 Housing Association social rented properties become available a year. Over 50 % of these vacancies are 1-bedroom and sheltered properties.
- Since 2018, 145 homeless prevention tenancies have been set up via Rent Deposit Scheme.
- Private rented sector landlords and letting agencies remain reluctant to let to households in receipt of benefits. The median market rent for a 2-bedroom property was £1350 pcm, 20 per cent higher than the Local Housing Allowance rate of £1100 (equating to a shortfall of over £2,880 per year). However, the average rent for a 2-bedroom property is actually £2069 pcm. This leaves the sector largely inaccessible to households on low incomes or in receipt of benefits.
- Consistently over the last 4 years single homeless people have accounted for over 50% of the Council's homeless approaches.
- In 2020/21 of the 316 homeless approaches 176 were single people, of which 31 were identified as having a history of rough sleeping as a support need.
- Under Everyone-In Epsom & Ewell Borough Council accommodated over 60 single people who were either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.
- A history of rough sleeping was the 2nd most identified support need for single homeless people. Many of those sleeping rough or with a history of rough sleeping have multiple and complex needs with the predominant factors being poor mental health and substance misuse. Other characteristics are offending, low self-esteem, unemployment, chaotic behaviour, and some are difficult to engage.
- Within the borough there is a limited supply of low-level supported accommodation and there is a significant lack of medium-high level supported accommodation for rough sleepers/single homeless people with multiple and complex needs.



Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027

Contents

- ## Version Control & Tracking

Revision History

Page 36

1. Forward & Introduction**2. Vision & Summary of the Key Objectives over the next five years**

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out how Epsom & Ewell Borough Council intends to meet the needs of our residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including rough sleeping and single people over the next five years.

The strategy outlines our strategic vision and the key objectives we aim to achieve when addressing homelessness within the borough. It sets out our commitment to preventing homelessness at an earlier stage and how we will work with our partners across all sectors to develop an integrated approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.

Our strategic vision is to see: ***“The council and its partners working collaboratively to prevent homelessness, to proactively reduce and end rough sleeping, assist homeless households to find affordable housing solutions and ensure the right support is available to promote recovery and improve health and wellbeing.”***

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is informed by a detailed review of all forms of homelessness within the borough. The priorities identified in the strategy are based on the findings in the review.

In this strategy we have identified six key objectives for the next five years and these emphasise the importance of early intervention and prevention as promoted in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Each objective is supported by a number of actions to enable the priorities to be achieved.

These six key objectives are: -

1. The early identification, intervention & prevention of homelessness
2. Reduce Rough Sleeping
3. Increase accommodation options
 - Social Rented Housing
 - Private Rented Accommodation
 - Supported and move-on Accommodation
 - In-borough Temporary Accommodation
4. Improve the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people
5. Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people
6. Partnership working

Delivery of the strategy will be supported by an Action Plan, which sets out the individual actions and activities to be undertaken and details how the Council will achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy. The strategy and Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis through a multi-agency Homelessness Forum.

3. Legal background and the purpose of the review and strategy

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on every local authority to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy, setting out how the local authority intends to tackle and prevent homelessness in their area.

The strategy must be based on a review of all forms of homelessness within that local authority's area and should be reviewed at least every five years. The purpose of the Homelessness Review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the area, identify future trends and any gaps in the service currently being provided.

The review should assess the:

- Levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the borough
- Activities that are carried out which prevent homelessness, secure accommodation for homeless people and provide support to people who are or may become homeless
- Resources available to carry out these activities.

In addition, the Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities sets out some requirements for a Homelessness Strategy. It should:

- Link to the wider contributory factors of homelessness, such as health, wellbeing, employment, and economic factors.
- Be consistent with other corporate strategies and objectives.
- Involve partners in implementing the strategic homelessness objectives.
- Have an Action Plan to show how the strategic objectives will be achieved.
- Be monitored and reviewed during the life of the Strategy.

In 2018 the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) also published its “Rough Sleeping Strategy” which set out the government’s vision “to support every person who sleeps rough off the streets and into a home”; to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027. It focuses on three key themes: Prevention; Intervention; and Recovery. In 2021 this was further enhanced to include Systems Support to embed change and monitor progress. In September 2022, DLUHC published a new cross-government strategy to end rough sleeping called “Ending Rough Sleeping for Good”. The principles of this new strategy are already included with this Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

4. Defining homelessness

Crisis defines Homelessness as follows: -

“Homelessness is about more than rooflessness. A home is not just a physical space, it also has a legal and social dimension. A home provides roots, identity, a sense of belonging and a place of emotional wellbeing. Homelessness is about the loss of all these. It is an isolating and destructive experience and homeless people are some of the most vulnerable and socially excluded in our society.”

Homelessness includes:

Statutory Homelessness:

The Housing Act 1996 defines homelessness as “A household is legally homeless if, either, they do not have accommodation that they are entitled to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to them, or they have accommodation, but it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy this accommodation”

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into force on 3 April 2018. It has made significant changes to Part 7 of the 1996 Act. Its main effect is to place increased duties on local authorities to assess an applicant’s needs and to prevent and relieve homelessness.

A person is threatened with homelessness if it is likely that they will become homeless within 56 days. Where a person is threatened with homelessness, the Council will owe that person a prevention duty and must take reasonable steps to prevent them from becoming homeless either by helping to avoid the loss of their existing accommodation or by trying to help them find new accommodation before they become homeless.

When a person is already homeless or becomes homeless after the prevention stage, the Council will owe that person a relief duty for up to 56 days and must take or continue to take reasonable steps to relieve them from being homeless by trying to help them find new accommodation.

Under both the prevention and relief stage the Council will have a duty to carry out an assessment with the person to look into the circumstances that caused them to become homeless or threatened with homelessness and to establish their housing and support needs. A Personalised Housing Plan will then be agreed which will set out the actions (or ‘reasonable steps’) to be taken by the Council and the person to help them remain in their current accommodation or to find alternative accommodation.

If the person is homeless or threatened with homelessness the Council will have some form of duty towards them. This ranges from advice and assistance, or providing interim or temporary accommodation, to a main housing duty of securing accommodation for a continuing period.

The extent of the duty will depend on whether or not they are eligible for assistance, in priority need, intentionally homeless, or have a local connection. The Council will also be required to carry out enquiries and assess what duty, if any, may be owed to the person under the homelessness legislation.

Appendix 2

Appendix 2

- [illegible]

[illegible]

Appendix 2

Appendix 2

Appendix 2

Appendix 2

Appendix 2

Appendix 2

Appendix 2

Appendix 2

6.1 National Context

The Government's White Paper on housing, 'Fixing our broken housing market', in March 2018 acknowledged the scale of the problem in providing a range of housing that meets a cross-section of need. Without a cure to the imbalance in the market, the result has been a national increase in all forms of housing need, exhibiting itself in the most acute forms of housing need – homelessness and rough sleeping.

Figures released by the then Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (now DLUHC) show there were 96,060 households in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2021. This was a 1.5% increase on the number a year previously and is part of a long-term increase.

Affordability and the issue of households on low incomes being able to resolve their housing need is particularly challenging in London and the South East.

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) has not kept pace with the market resulting in an increasingly unaffordable private rented market for households on low incomes who are dependent either wholly or in part for assistance with their housing costs. A direct correlation can be made between the increasing disparity between the LHA and the increase in the number of homelessness applications resulting from a loss of accommodation within that sector.

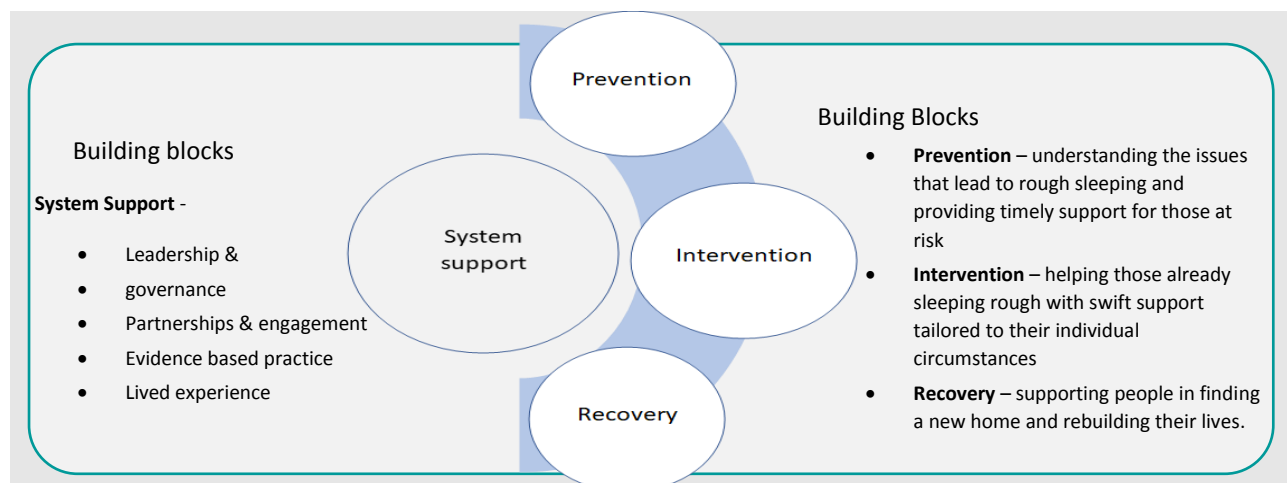
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Homeless households are provided with assistance under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 ('the HRA'), which came into force on 3rd April 2018. The HRA renewed the focus on preventing and relieving homelessness, placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages, and to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those in priority need.

On 1st October 2018 the 'duty to refer' process came into force, giving certain public bodies a legal duty to refer households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to a local authority for advice and assistance. Whilst registered providers do not have a duty to refer, a number have signed up to the 'Commitment to Refer', which is a voluntary commitment to make referrals. The Council encourages registered providers with housing stock in the borough to adopt such practices as it provides earlier opportunities to intervene and potentially prevent homelessness.

Rough Sleeping Strategy

The Government published a Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018 that lays out their commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. Work to deliver these aims is built around three core pillars: Prevention (understanding the issues that lead to rough sleeping and providing timely support for those at risk), Intervention (helping those already sleeping rough with swift support tailored to their individual circumstances) and Recovery (supporting people in finding a new home and rebuilding their lives). In 2021 this was further enhanced to include Systems Support to embed change and monitor progress.



The strategy acknowledges that ending rough sleeping will require central and local government, as well as business, communities, faith and voluntary groups and the general public to work together to tackle the problem.

Welfare Reform

Welfare reforms presents ongoing challenges to households in receipt of benefits and to the organisations and individuals that house and support them.

Most notably local authorities and social housing providers have reported its impact on claimants' ability to meet their household costs and there has been a reported increase in rent arrears and issues of affordability across all sectors.

- **Benefit Cap** – Benefits have been capped to limit the amount households can receive unless they are working for the required hours: Outside Greater London this is £384.62 per week (£ 1,666.67 per month or £20,000 per year) for couples and lone parents and £257.69 per week (£1,116.67 per month or £13,400 per year) for single adults.
- **Single Room Rate** – Single people under the age of 35 are only able to claim the single room Local Housing Allowance Rate – this is the rate of a room in a shared house. This makes it very difficult for those under 35 to secure a home in the private rented sector that they can afford.
- **Spare Room Subsidy** – Children of different sexes are expected to share a bedroom until aged 10 and of the same sex until aged 16. Housing benefit/Universal Credit is calculated on this basis and where families are 'under-occupying', tenants are required to meet any shortfall in rent.
- **Local Housing Allowance** – In 2016 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were frozen for four years until 2020.
- **Personal Independence Payment** – Personal Independence Payment (PIP) has replaced Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people aged 16 to 64 making new claims. This is based on how a person's condition affects them, not the condition they have.
- **Universal Credit** – Universal Credit (UC) sees all working age benefits (excluding Personal Independence Payment and Carer's Allowance) rolled into one single monthly payment. This payment includes the housing element and is paid direct to the tenant.

In 2018 Crisis report **Preventing Homelessness its everybody's business**, focussed on actions for 5 government departments, with key recommendations:

- The Department for Work and Pensions should establish a network of housing and homelessness specialists in Jobcentres to ensure that once people are rehoused they are also supported to move into employment.
- The Ministry of Justice should include successfully meeting the long-term accommodation needs of people leaving prison as a measure of success in the new probation contracts. They should also ensure that evidence-based housing-led solutions that have proved effective at preventing homelessness for prison leavers, such as Critical Time Interventions, are implemented consistently across the country.
- The Department of Health and Social Care should require every hospital that sees more than 200 homeless patients each year to have a full Pathway team, including a GP, nursing staff, care navigators and a dedicated housing worker. The Home Office should extend the 28 day move on period for newly recognised refugees to at least 56 days to ensure that local authorities have sufficient time to work with a household to prevent them from becoming homeless.
- The Home Office should require the police to ask every victim of domestic abuse whether they need help and support with housing. If the person consents, then the police should make a referral to the local housing authority.
- The Department for Education should ensure that evidence-based housing-led solutions, such as Critical Time Interventions, are part of the housing and support options available for young people leaving care.

A new Domestic Abuse Act came into force in 2021 which places new duties on local authorities. The measures in the Act include:

- A statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse. As part of this definition, children will be explicitly recognised as victims if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of abuse.
- Extending the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse.
- A duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.
- All eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance.
- When local authorities rehouse victims of domestic abuse, they do not lose a secure lifetime or assured tenancy.
- A new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order, which will prevent perpetrators from contacting their victims, as well as force them to take positive steps to change their behaviour.

Leaving the European Union

The United Kingdom left the European Union on 31 December 2020. The ramifications for housing-related areas (such as the housing market, the labour market, forecasted and actual population growth, the economy, financing programmes and procurement rules) are as yet unknown.

Covid-19 Pandemic and the impact on Housing Services

The impact of the Pandemic has been far reaching for both the service and our users. The Pandemic led to rapid changes to the way the Housing Services was delivered. Prior to the Pandemic all our clients were seen face to face, with a Housing Option interview. From March 2020 the Housing Services staff had to move to telephone-based interview and communication, with the electronic upload of documentation through the Homechoice website. This has worked well, with many households preferring the convenience of a telephone appointment. A hybrid arrangement is likely to operate in the future, with the opportunity for everyone to have face to face interviews.

Following the UK Covid-19 Lockdown in March 2020, the then Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government wrote to all local authorities in England requesting that they all should provide emergency accommodation to protect rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was referred to as "Everyone-In".

This coincided with the closure of most hotels and guest houses across the UK, and the Council had to enter into complex negotiations with providers to procure self-contained accommodation for single homeless people as well as for people and families who were COVID-19 positive.

Under Everyone-In Epsom & Ewell Borough Council accommodated over 60 single people who were either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping and this has led to a rapid increase in the numbers of single people accommodated in emergency accommodation. Many of those accommodated had multiple and complex needs, requiring higher levels of support and management.

The Council staff also undertook weekly welfare calls for the duration of all Lockdowns and were instrumental in helping roll out the vaccine programme to homeless households.

In September 2020, the Council successfully bid for £157, 000 funding under the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) to support our work to find housing solutions for those assisted off the street during the Pandemic. This funding meant that we were able to employ a Single Person Homeless Support officer on a 12-month fixed term contract to support and assist those accommodated under Everyone-In to find either supported or private rented accommodation and financially help them with rent in advance and deposits. The funding also contributed to the costs of providing emergency accommodation during the pandemic.

Whilst the numbers of single people being accommodated significantly increased, the number of families approaching the Council declined. This was mainly due to the Emergency Covid-19 legislation temporary ban on most forms of evictions. These restrictions were removed in October 2021 and cases are now starting to progress their way through the County Court system. It is anticipated that in 2022/23 a significantly higher number of people will approach the Council as homeless/threatened with homelessness from the private rented sector, many of whom would not have previously needed to use the service before.

The Pandemic has also seen improved collaborative partnership working with Surrey County Council Public Health and several health initiatives have been developed for homeless households.

6.2 Local Context

Epsom and Ewell is a small borough in Surrey, home to approximately 80,000 people. Situated on Surrey's northern border, its nearest neighbours are the London Boroughs of Kingston and Sutton, and the two Surrey districts of Mole Valley and Reigate & Banstead. The borough is extremely well connected, due, in part, to its prime location. It has excellent road and rail links. The M25 and A3 trunk roads are easily accessible, plus central London is less than 30 minutes by train. Both London Heathrow and Gatwick airports are located close by.

Epsom and Ewell is an affluent area where people benefit from an excellent quality of life. Residents enjoy good health, long life expectancy, first class education, and positive levels of employment.

However, this picture does mask pockets of deprivation across the borough, for example, Court Ward is the 4th most deprived ward in Surrey. The borough experiences other challenges as well. The borough is the most densely populated in Surrey. Just over 1,200 children are living in poverty. Despite housing expansion, housing pressures remain due to high prices and low affordability. Rates of homelessness are an on-going concern.

Population & Household Composition: The latest population estimate (mid-2017) for the borough is 79,451 (51% female; 49% male).

Epsom and Ewell is the most densely populated borough in Surrey. Comprising an area just over 3,400 hectares (the smallest in Surrey) it has 23.32 persons per hectare. In comparison, Mole Valley, the least densely populated borough, comprises just 3.37 persons per hectare.

The percentage breakdown across three broad age groups closely reflects the county's position: 20.4% are children aged 0-15 years (Surrey 19.6%); 61.4% are aged 16-64 years (Surrey 61.6%); and 18.2% are older people aged 65+ years (Surrey 18.7%). 25.5% of Epsom and Ewell households comprise people aged 65+ only. This is slightly higher than the Surrey average of 24.4% and higher than the national average of 23.7%.

The percentage of people from an ethnic minority group is approximately 14%. Epsom and Ewell ethnic breakdown shows that the two largest ethnic groups are White (86%) and Asian/Asian British (8.6%). Other representation includes 1.5% Black/African/ Caribbean/Black British.

The borough's population is projected to grow by 16.2%. This is the second biggest percentage increase in Surrey, being closely behind Reigate and Banstead at 16.3%. Surrey's population is projected to grow by 10.9%. In line with the national picture, the borough's population is predicted to age. Whereas the number of under 50s will increase by 4.8%, the number of over 50s will increase by 34.2%. Notable changes include a 76.2% increase in the number of people aged 85+ years. The number of under 10s will increase by 3.9%, but will decrease across Surrey as a whole by 3.8%.

Social Mobility & Deprivation: Epsom and Ewell is ranked 18th out of 324 local authorities on the Social Mobility Index, the highest of all the Surrey districts.

Epsom and Ewell is one of the 10% least deprived areas in England. Out of 326 areas in the UK, Epsom and Ewell is ranked 310, where 1 is the most deprived. The three most deprived wards in Epsom and Ewell are Court, Ruxley and Town. Out of 193 wards in Surrey, Court is ranked 4th, Ruxley 22nd and Town 52nd.

Between 2014 and 2016 life expectancy at birth for men was 81.6 years and 85.3 years for women. This is slightly higher than the figures for Surrey of 81.4 years and 84.6 years respectively.

The inequalities gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived is 7 years for men and 2.9 years for women. In Surrey the difference is 5.7 years and 4.4 years respectively. The national inequality range is 9.3 years for men and 7.3 years for women.

There are 1,280 children living in poverty in Epsom and Ewell. Some areas of Court and Ruxley wards have the highest number of children in out-of-work families benefiting from tax credits or child benefits. 7.5% (2,336) of households are estimated to experience fuel poverty. This is less than the Surrey and national averages of 9.7% and 11% respectively.

For Citizens' Advice Epsom and Ewell, the four biggest areas of work in 2017/18 comprised welfare benefits; money advice and debt; housing; and employment.

Employment: 83.2% of the borough's population aged 16 - 64 years were economically active between July 2017 and June 2018. This is slightly higher than the equivalent percentage for Surrey at 80.4% and the South East at 81.1%. 86.1% and 80.4% of all males and females respectively aged 16 to 64 years were economically active. Between July 2017 and June 2018, 80.0% of the population aged 16 - 64 years were in employment. This is higher than the equivalent for Surrey at 78.3%. • 3% of the population aged 16 to 64 years were unemployed.

Out of Work Benefits: In October 2018 the percentage of claimants aged 16+ was 0.8%. The equivalent for Surrey was 0.7% and 1.4% for the South East.

Housing: There are approximately 32,240 dwellings in Epsom and Ewell. 91.9% are private sector owned, 8.1% private registered provided (2600) and 0.1% are local authority owned (includes those owned by other local authorities).

The percentage of private sector properties owned in the borough is higher than the equivalent average for Surrey (88.4%) and nationally (82.6%). The percentage of social housing (or private registered provider) at 8.07%, which is significantly lower than other areas in Surrey, such as Guilford which is 14.1%.

For the year ending December 2017, the median property price for a home in Epsom and Ewell was £470,000. This is £15,000 more than the previous year and £40,000 higher than the median property price in Surrey. Epsom and Ewell ranks the third most expensive borough in Surrey, with median house prices in Elmbridge being the highest at £570,000, and then Mole Valley at £500,000.

For those who work in Epsom and Ewell it is the least affordable place in Surrey to afford property. In 2017 local people could expect to pay 17.8 times their annual workplace-based earnings on purchasing a home. Those who work out of borough but live in Epsom and Ewell could expect to pay 13.07 times their annual salary to afford property. This affordability ratio is higher than the Surrey average of 11.86 and significantly higher when compared to the English (National) average 7.91.

Further information on the Borough Profile can be found - <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/documents/s13315/Future40%20Annex%201.pdf>

7. Strategic fit

Within the Council there are a number of policies and strategies that link with the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and it is important that this strategy feeds into the Council's overarching Four Year Plan.

- Four Year Plan
- Local Plan & Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Service Delivery plans
- Housing Allocation Policy /Tenancy Strategy

8. The Homelessness Review - Understanding homelessness in Epsom & Ewell

In developing this strategy, a detailed review of homelessness in Epsom & Ewell has been undertaken. The purpose of the Homelessness Review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the area, identify future trends and any gaps in the service currently being provided. The review has considered a range of information including:

- Number of homeless approaches
- Reasons for homelessness
- Homeless Prevention and Relief cases and outcomes
- Support needs of homeless households
- The type of individuals and households becoming homeless
- Households in nightly paid accommodation & in-borough temporary accommodation
- Supply and Demand of Affordable housing - Housing Needs Register and social housing lettings
- Private rented housing & the Rent Deposit Scheme
- Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness
- The current Housing Options Service & existing homelessness prevention measures

The data within the Homelessness Review will be updated, evaluated and monitored on a regular basis so we are able to predict future trends of homelessness, identify households at risk of homelessness and inform new service improvements.

The Homelessness Review provides comprehensive information to develop the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 to 2027. The key findings of the review are presented in the summary below and influence the direction of the Strategy. Full details of the review are provided within the main Homelessness Review document which should be read in conjunction with this strategy.

What the Homelessness Review is telling us - Key findings, local trends, and challenges

Key Findings

- Homeless approaches to the Housing Options Service have significantly increased since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act and forecasting predictions show that this increase is likely to continue. Between April 2018 and December 2021, the Housing Option Service dealt with 1385 approaches for advice and assistance regarding homelessness.
- Despite the rising demand, the Housing Options Team continues to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness, with a total 1089 cases since 2018.
- The majority of people who approach the Housing Options Service for assistance do so either before they are threatened with homelessness (at the triage stage) or within 56 days before becoming homeless (the prevention stage). However, this is not the case for single people who are more likely to approach the Council when they are actually homeless (at the relief stage).
- The three main causes of homelessness are:
 - Asked to leave by family and friends
 - Termination of Assured Shorthold tenancies
 - Domestic Abuse
- 75% of homeless applicants said they had additional support needs. The most prevailing support need for all clients was with their mental health. Amongst the single homeless population the most prevailing support needs were; mental health; a history of rough sleeping; physical ill health/disability; offending; and drug & alcohol dependency. For the other households, including those with children, this was debt/budgeting; physical ill health/disability; and domestic abuse.
- The ethnic origin of homeless households appears to largely reflect the demography of the borough.
- In December 2021 there were a total of 235 homeless households accommodated by the Council in either in-borough temporary accommodation (155) or nightly paid accommodation (80). Of these, 161 households had dependent children, with a total of 302 children.
- The average time a homeless household with children spends in temporary accommodation is 225 weeks or 4.3 years before being offered permanent/settled social housing. This is increasing.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has put a legal duty on councils to offer more support to a wider range of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and to intervene earlier to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Successfully preventing and relieving homelessness has always been and remains the main aim and focus of the Council's Housing Options Service.

Prevention actions include any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. This would involve activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation to prevent them from becoming homeless. Relief duties are owed to households who become homeless or are already homeless and require help to secure alternative accommodation.

The Homelessness Reduction Act provides opportunities to build on our preventative and relief work with partner organisations and to identify those at risk of homelessness at a much earlier stage, which will enable us to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness.

Early identification

Key to the success of this preventative focus is early identification of homelessness. By identifying the specific triggers, risk factors and causes of homelessness at different points in people's lives we will be able to develop a range of interventions specifically targeted at addressing these.

This approach recognises the wider impact of homelessness, particularly in relation to health and wellbeing and will empower individuals and build resilience.

The Council will work with core partners to understand and address the root causes of homelessness within the borough and encourage these organisations to actively seek to identify people at risk of homelessness and to refer people for help at an early stage when support could prevent homelessness.

Early intervention & Prevention

Preventing homelessness in the first place is a crucial element of this strategy and the Council recognises the importance of early intervention. It is widely accepted that models of homeless service delivery that prioritise prevention are most cost effective and can help more people avoid homelessness in the first place. Early intervention means recognising people at risk of homelessness and taking steps to prevent a setback turning into homelessness.

Early intervention can take the form of advice and information, mediation services; proactive interventions, such as negotiating with landlords to enable people to retain their tenancies; assistance with debt; and targeted services at known risk points, such as those leaving care, hospital, prison or the armed forces.

We want to proactively make residents, communities and organisations aware of the help and support available, rather than just waiting for people to approach us. Increase partnership working and making "Homelessness Everybody's Business", raise awareness of the impact homelessness can have on households and ensure that all agencies know how to appropriately refer households into the Housing Options Service. At the same time it is essential that we look at ways to reduce barriers for people seeking to engage so that it becomes as easy as possible for them to receive the support.

Addressing homelessness from the private rented sector is also critical and we will work with private sector landlords and lettings agents to understand how best to engage with them and to build an early alert system so they contact us if their tenants are at risk of homelessness.

We also want to manage our residents' expectations so that they understand when they approach our services that we are not able to offer many people a social home but can offer a wide range of other services to help them into a stable home. We also want to communicate the message that addressing homelessness requires the person or household affected and the Council to work together to find a solution.

model. The Housing First model is about providing a stable home for a rough sleeper and from this point, any other support needs they might have – such as alcohol and drug dependency, physical and/or mental health problems are addressed through coordinated and intensive support.

We will adopt a more flexible approach to working with rough sleepers and will explore the full range of appropriate options. We will continue to work closely with DLUHC expert advisers to gain insight into models of good practice and to secure available government funding.

There is a clear link between homelessness and health and wellbeing. The national strategy highlights the importance of the role of health services in tackling rough sleeping because of the high proportion of rough sleepers who suffer from mental ill-health, physical ill-health, addiction issues and the challenges rough sleepers face in accessing mainstream health services. We will also plan to promote the importance of health interventions in tackling rough sleeping and helping a person's recovery.

What we will do:

- Further develop the Ending Rough Sleeping Delivery plan
- Continue to work with eSOS partners to maintain the provision of effective Outreach Services.
- Deliver SWEP provision annually to prevent rough sleeping during severe weather.
- Provide eSOS assessment beds
- Explore a 'Housing First' model for the most vulnerable homeless applicants.
- Conduct a promotional campaign to the residents of the borough to provide information and awareness on rough sleeping and promote good practice amongst the general public to prevent people becoming entrenched into street life.
- Review accommodation and health support needs of single people with complex needs or challenging behaviours who experience recurring homelessness.
- Develop a No Second Night Out approach to prevent all rough sleeping
- Apply for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding to create a new post of Single Person Homeless Support Officer to work solely with Rough Sleepers and single homeless people at risk of rough sleeping
- With our East Surrey Partners apply for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding to enhance the ESOS Outreach Service
- Look to implement corporate "sponsorship" of up to 5 people with more complex and longer-term patterns of rough sleeping at requested by DLUHC.

Key Objective 3 - Increase accommodation options

The inability of households to access affordable housing is recognised in this strategy as one of the main causal factors for homelessness in the borough. The Homelessness Reduction Act alone cannot succeed in tackling homelessness when the underlying causes are mostly concerned with limited supply and affordability. The limited supply of both affordable housing and supported accommodation has not only significantly increased the number of households living in temporary accommodation but also the length of time they spend there before a settled housing solution can be found.

The biggest increase in demand for temporary accommodation is from single adults, often with multiple and complex needs. The majority of single adult households are placed in nightly paid accommodation outside of the borough. This demonstrates a need for the Council to secure more supported and move-on accommodation provision.

Consequently, increasing the range and availability of affordable accommodation options across all sectors is a key priority for the strategy.

The aim is to increase the availability of suitable and affordable housing in both the social rented and the private rented sector and to develop supported and move-on accommodation options for those with multiple and complex needs.

Alongside this we need to ensure the provision of good quality temporary accommodation within the borough so that households are able to maintain their support and social networks and reduce any disruption with getting to their place of employment and their children to school.

Social Rented Housing

- Address the housing needs of the borough, including affordable housing needs, through the development of our Local Plan
- Review of planning policies to be addressed through Local Plan to deliver more social/affordable, supported and temporary accommodation
- Work with Homes England to identify opportunities for the use of the Affordable Homes Programme 2021 to 2026 to fund Council developments of new affordable housing
- Identify opportunities for the development of social/affordable, supported and temporary accommodation on Council owned sites. List of sites being prepared.
- Purchase residential street properties to provide social/affordable, supported and temporary accommodation
- Explore opportunities for joint working with housing providers to create additional social/affordable, supported and temporary accommodation
- Develop a programme for the dispersal of s106 affordable housing funding to provide additional, social/affordable, supported and temporary accommodation
- Review nomination agreements
- Investigate ways to assist and/or incentivise social housing tenants under occupying larger family homes to downsize

Private Rented Accommodation

- Review and update Rent Deposit Scheme policy, procedures and scheme documents.
- Introduce rent in advance as a loan
- Set up e-learning pre-tenancy training and life skills to those threatened with homelessness or in temporary accommodation
- Review the current private rented sector (PRS) offer and explore/trial landlord incentives with a view to increasing local PRS opportunities.
- Provide enhanced information and support to customers on how to search for PRS properties to enable them to undertake future searches independently.
- Arrange and co-ordinate an annual Private Sector Landlords forum
- Work across the housing market to maximise opportunities to increase the range of accommodation options for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Support and advise private sector landlords to understand the implications of Universal Credit and develop appropriate strategies to encourage PRS landlords to accept customers in receipt of welfare benefits
- Encourage landlords to increase the length of tenancies to provide stability and security to tenants.
- Encourage landlords to offer more affordable rents - closer to LHA rates.
- Facilitate the use of empty properties
- Investigate the feasibility of rent guarantee/ insurance schemes for tenants and landlords

Supported and move-on Accommodation

- We will review our current provision of supported accommodation and explore the need for specialist supported accommodation for clients that have multiple and complex needs
- Look to increase supported accommodation in partnership with other boroughs/districts, public bodies and Housing Associations.
- Work with local social landlords to investigate developing a trial of a Housing First style approach
- Work with Transform Housing & Support to deliver 4 units of supported move- on accommodation for Rough Sleepers, funded through Rough Sleeper Accommodation Program (RSAP) and the Homes England Move-On Fund.

- Review the supply of temporary accommodation and identify future local temporary accommodation needs and how these can be best met.
- Review and update the temporary accommodation procurement plan
- Review and update the temporary accommodation placement policy.
- Increase the number of private sector leasing scheme properties
- Work with Sanctuary Housing to develop up to 14 units of in-borough temporary accommodation at Defoe Court.

Key Objective 4 - Improve the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people

In 2019, the Council agreed the Borough's Health & Wellbeing strategy. The strategy identified 5 key priorities for the borough, with a focus on the health and wellbeing inequalities experienced by those residents who are more vulnerable due to their life circumstance. The strategy highlighted that poor health and wellbeing outcomes can be the direct result of the wider determinants of health (such as social and economic status or living environment). An individual who is homeless is significantly more likely to experience poor physical and mental health, as a direct result of having in-secure housing, or no address. This is both situational in respect of not being able to register at the necessary health services, and circumstantial in respect of a significant shift in prioritisation; trying to secure the finances to survive, as opposed to being able to engage in behaviours that help them thrive.

It is widely understood that those experiencing homelessness are also 80% more likely to have mental health problems, and that this may be further compounded by other factors such as substance misuse, poverty/debt, domestic abuse, learning difficulties, employment prospects, and poor physical health. In recognition that these factors persist upon the prevention or resolution of homelessness, the Council will seek to work with statutory and voluntary services to ensure that the opportunities afforded to those at risk of homelessness are met. In the absence of such, determinants such as poverty/debt will continue to adversely impact on an individual's ability to engage in positive health behaviours. Supporting our homeless population remains a key priority for the Council and we will promote the importance of health interventions in helping a homeless person's recovery.

What we will do:

- Develop a make every contact matter ethos across the service and with partners.
- Work with applicants to build on their own skills and strengths to develop their resilience and self-sufficiency.
- Work closely with the SCC Public Health and Health Services to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable homeless people, especially those with multiple & complex needs through the work of the Surrey Homeless Multi-Agency Group (MAG).
- Work in partnership with Surrey Adults Matter (SAM) to focus on delivering better coordinated services to improve the lives of adults facing Severe Multiple Disadvantage
- Work closely with SCC Public Health/SAM to pilot the "Bridge the Gap" trauma informed Outreach Support Service.

Key Objective 5 - Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people

Epsom & Ewell recognises that for some households homelessness cannot be tackled, or prevented, solely through the provision of accommodation. Some households will require a range of support services to help them sustain their accommodation as well as personal support relating to factors such as relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, mental health problems, drug and alcohol addiction, offending, poverty, debt and unemployment.

One of the key areas of focus in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is that the support needs of applicants are assessed and personalised housing plans are made to meet any support needs identified. The Act also requires that the housing advice given is tailored to the needs of specific vulnerable groups. Groups specifically mentioned are: those leaving prison or youth detention; care leavers; former members of the armed forces; people leaving hospital; people experiencing domestic abuse; and those suffering from mental illness.

The Council wants to work with our partners to improve the support available to households who are homeless or could be at risk of becoming homeless in the future. Providing the right support is important in helping homeless households recover from the effects of homelessness and will help build resilience.

What we will do:

- Ensure there is a clear documented housing pathway for groups who need specialist support, including each of the specified groups.
- Review the internal and external support services provided and explore opportunities to provide a more targeted and efficient service, particularly to those with complex needs to intervene early to prevent recurring homelessness.
- Continue to fund and work with our East Surrey partners and Thames Reach to provide a specialist outreach support services for rough sleepers.
- Continue to support those households to access employment, education and training through continuing to fund ETHOS and through working with the Employment Hub.
- Ensure that homeless households have the skills required to maintain a tenancy.
- Continue to work with tenancy sustainment and floating support services to ensure that those households placed in temporary accommodation are receiving appropriate support and assistance.
- Review our current provision of supported accommodation and explore the need for specialist supported accommodation for clients that have multiple and complex needs.
- Proactively work with households in temporary accommodation to identify and secure suitable alternative accommodation and ensure that each household has a move on plan.
- For some homeless households there are issues that prevent move on from temporary accommodation. There are a variety of reasons for this which include; the benefit cap, history of rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, offending, complex health issues and other risk issues that make both social and private landlords reluctant to accept them as tenants. We will identify these issues and put in place measures to try to address them.
- Continue to support homeless household to find and secure private rented accommodation through the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme.
- Offer tenancy support and sustainment to households who are assisted to access private rented accommodation via the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme.
- Continue to support individuals and families that experience domestic abuse.
- Continue to fund the Sanctuary Scheme to help victims of domestic abuse to safely remain in their homes.
- Identify support needs at an early stage and refer to appropriate services (drug/alcohol, mental health, young persons, domestic abuse, ex-offenders, money advice, employment support, floating support, foodbank, CAB).
- Promote resilience and support to those who are or used to be homeless, to improve their resilience and reduce the risk of them from becoming homeless again.
- Work with Children's Services and the Family Support team to identify families who need some additional help beyond accommodation needs and ensure arrangements are in place to refer households with children to Early Help/Family Support as early as possible
- Work with partners to identify tenants at risk of "cuckooing" and ensure rapid interventions are in place to support them.
- Work with partners to support Surrey Adult Matter (MEAM) and the "Bridge the Gap" trauma informed Outreach Support Service for homeless people
- Make referrals to furniture projects to ensure that homeless households have a furniture offer when moving into new accommodation.

Key Objective 6 - Partnership working - Preventing homelessness is everybody's business

It is widely recognised that no single organisation can prevent or relieve homelessness. All partners have a role to play in preventing homelessness and addressing the underlying issues that are the root causes of homelessness such as poverty, unemployment, poor physical and mental health, and family breakdown. "Preventing homelessness is everybody's business".

Addressing the underlying causes of homelessness and working closely with relevant partners is pivotal to the success of this strategy. The Housing Options Service has well established partner relationships with core agencies within the borough however it is a priority for this strategy that these relationships continue to develop and strengthen in order to ensure the borough is best equipped to deal with the changing pressures of homelessness.

Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out how we will work with our partners across all sectors to develop an integrated approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping. This will include both statutory and non-statutory stakeholders and include the private sector and those with lived experience of homelessness.

Only by working together can we effectively tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. By working together, we can improve services and interventions that support people when they are most in need and deliver better outcomes for them.

What we will do:

- Increase partnership working and make “homelessness everybody’s business”, raise awareness of the impact homelessness can have on households and ensure that all agencies know how to appropriately refer households into the Housing Options Service.
- Host an annual Homelessness forum with partner agencies.
- Host an annual Registered Provider Forum with a focus upon support for tenants at risk of homelessness.
- Host an annual Private Landlord’s Forum to increase the availability of private rented accommodation in the borough and to encourage good practice.
- Work in partnership to ensure appropriate multi-agency joint working and referral arrangements are in place for Housing Options Service and to explore how preventative services can be developed and improved.
- Promote more joined up working with, health, prison and probation services to prevent homelessness on discharge or release from an institution.
- Work closely with SCC Public Health and the Health Service to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable homeless people, especially those with multiple & complex needs through the work of the Surrey Homeless Multi-Agency Group (MAG).
- Further develop partnership working with the DWP and local Jobcentre plus to ensure the Housing Options Service has access to information and receive regular updates, including training on UC and other benefits.
- Maximise funding opportunities through partnership working to identify and bid for new initiatives, building upon recent successes (e.g. MEAM, Housing First, RSI, Next Steps and RSAP).
- Work with partners to identify how those with lived experience of homelessness can be included in the design and delivery of services.
- Campaign and raise awareness of issues of homelessness that are linked to affordability and to LHA rates and the Benefit Cap.
- Work with our Surrey partners in implementing the Domestic Abuse Act
- Work with our Surrey partners and Children Services in reviewing and implementing the Joint Housing Protocol for 16 -17 year olds & the Care Leavers Protocol
- Work closely with our Surrey partners and Health Services to review and implement the Mental Health Protocol and the Hospital Discharge Protocol.

10. Targeted Groups

Finding Pathways for At Risk Groups

Research has shown that certain groups of people are disadvantaged in their ability to access housing, are overrepresented in homeless populations and often struggle to maintain a home without support.

The Council has a duty to consider the needs of these people and plan to provide the services they need to prevent homelessness and ensure there is support in place for them to maintain accommodation. These targeted groups are:

The homelessness review has shown that the most identified support need for homeless households was a history of mental health problems.

The Housing Options available for single clients experiencing mental ill-health depend on how stable their health is at the point they need housing help and their willingness to engage. The complexity and challenges around mental ill-health mean different clients need different solutions.

Within the borough there is a limited supply of low-level supported accommodation with a total of 44 bed spaces mainly with Transform Housing & Support. These providers are unable to take clients with more complex needs and there is a significant lack of medium-high level supported accommodation for single homeless people with multiple and complex needs.

Clients assisted into supported accommodation are prioritised for moved-on accommodation on the Housing Needs Register and those placed outside of the borough due to lack of local availability will retain their local connection on the register.

Where appropriate, Housing Services will support clients assessed as able to sustain a tenancy into private rented accommodation, working with partners such as the Forward Trust to source private self-contained housing. However, we recognise that there are significant barriers for single people being able to access private rented accommodation, this includes landlords unwilling to take tenants in receipt of welfare benefits, under 35 single room LHA rate, shortfall between market rents levels and the LHA rate and the requirement for rent guarantors.

There is also a reluctance for general needs social housing providers to accept nominations for rough sleepers/single homeless who have multiple and complex needs without the required support package or a proven history of maintaining a tenancy. This is often the same for temporary accommodation within the borough as the needs are considered too high.

Unfortunately, some clients with more significant mental ill-health or multiple needs, are deemed too high need for most providers. In some cases, these clients are also deemed below the threshold for specialist mental health Adult Social Care.

This gap in provision means that single homeless people with multiple and complex needs often remain in interim/emergency accommodation, often out of area, while work is undertaken to try to find appropriate supported accommodation.

We are working with Transform Housing & Support to develop 2 x 1 bed flats as part of the Home England Move-on fund funding which we hope will be ready for rough sleepers by early 2022. In addition, utilising RSAP funding we are working with Transform Housing & Support to purchase 2 properties which will provide support accommodation on the Housing First model for single homeless people with more complex needs.

Surrey has in place a County Mental Health and Housing Protocol to be followed where a client is in hospital. This enables Housing Services to engage with those at risk of homelessness at the earliest opportunity and means Housing Officers can visit wards, meet clients, attend ward round meetings and are involved in hospital discharge meetings and Care Plan Approaches. This joint multi-agency approach has helped planned discharges for clients who were at risk of homelessness. We are aware that not all health staff and ward nurses are aware of the protocol and further training is needed.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the homeless in Surrey the Homeless Multi-agency Group (MAG) was established to support the work happening in district and boroughs in the county. This provided new opportunities to work proactively and collaboratively with our Surrey colleagues to identify gaps in service provision, understand resourcing issues and opportunities for joined up working around mental health. The successful cross organisation bid for funding from the Changing Futures programme is a good example of this approach.

The MAG includes representation from Housing, Health, Primary Care, Mental Health Substance Misuse, Public Health and Criminal Justice, and County Commissioners. Whilst the initial focus was on COVID-19 it is now

established longer term to work with local districts & boroughs to improve the multi-agency approach for homeless persons in Surrey and has developed a Surrey Homeless MAG support plan.

The Council is part of Surrey Adult Matters (SAM) who adopted the national initiative Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM approach). Surrey Adults Matter is focused on delivering better coordinated services to improve the lives of adults facing Severe Multiple Disadvantage, and to reduce homelessness and reoffending. Many current and former rough sleepers have benefited from this multi-agency approach.

In 2022/23 the “Bridge the Gap” service is being piloted across Surrey. This is a trauma informed Outreach Support Service which will be operated by homeless, DA and mental health charities across Surrey on a pilot project for two years.

Care Leavers and 16 - 17 year olds

The Preventing Homelessness in Surrey – Joint Protocol for 16 -17 year olds sets out the joint working arrangements of Children’s Services and housing authorities to improve the experience of 16 and 17 year-olds who need help and support with accommodation.

This protocol includes the practical steps and duties that should be taken by Surrey Children’s Services and housing departments in relation to 16 and 17-year-olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This includes those 16 -17 year olds who are pregnant, have children themselves, have an older partner or are in and leaving custody. As a result of this protocol Housing Services have rarely had to place 16 - 17 year olds in emergency accommodation.

In addition, the Surrey Joint Housing Protocol for Care Leavers is currently being reviewed and updated. It is recognised that leaving care is a critical transition for young people and supporting them through this into adulthood is a major responsibility. The Protocol outlines the service offered by Children Services and Housing Services to Care Leavers to support them into safe and suitable accommodation.

As part of this process Housing Services attend quarterly meetings with the Looked After Children Team and Care Leavers Team to identify young people who may need help with housing in the future. Together, we aim to ensure a smooth transition, from care into private rent tenancies, supported or social housing tenancies. The meetings have identified that many of the young people were not joining the register and highlighted to personal advisors and social workers this is essential to help ensure a housing pathway.

The Council will amend the local connection rules applicable to care leavers wishing to join the Housing Needs Register. The change makes an exemption to the local connection rules for care leavers who are subject to a Surrey County Council corporate parenting duty.

Borough provision for support accommodation young people and care leavers is good. We work closely with Sanctuary Housing who operate Defoe Court. This is a 24-room supported accommodation scheme mainly for young people aged 18-24 but also takes placements of 16 -17 year olds, unaccompanied asylum seekers and emergency care beds on behalf of Surrey County Council.

Joint work is underway with the Surrey County Council to understand future housing provision for Care Leavers in the borough with the aim of delivering more Move-On accommodation.

Victims of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is third highest cause of homelessness with the borough and the sixth most commonly identified support need.

Anyone experiencing domestic abuse can approach Housing Options Team for assistance. A full assessment of housing and support needs would be completed and a personal housing plan created giving advice on finding alternative accommodation or remaining in the home, if it safe to do so with appropriate safety measures.

The Council has a nominated lead Housing Options Officer for domestic abuse who attends Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). Housing Services staff are trained on recognising and responding to households experiencing domestic abuse.

Due to higher numbers of domestic abuse cases in the borough, the regularity of MARAC increased from monthly to two weekly in 2020/21. MARAC is well attended and includes the Housing Options lead officer and Rosebery Housing Association, with attendees working together to support those experiencing domestic abuse through a range of measures including support to move if appropriate.

The Council has close working relationships with North Surrey Domestic Abusive Service who provide free, confidential, independent and impartial advice to anyone affected by domestic abuse living in the boroughs of Epsom & Ewell, Elmbridge or Spelthorne.

They can assist by giving skilled practical help, ongoing emotional support, and information and advice on issues such as safety planning, housing rights, relationships and separation, civil and criminal court proceedings, and the needs of children affected by domestic abuse.

We operate a Sanctuary Scheme with the North Surrey Domestic Abuse Services, Rosebery Housing Association and the Police CRO. The scheme helps victims of domestic abuse to remain safely in their own accommodation by installing additional security measures.

We work with 11 Surrey District and Boroughs to facilitate a Surrey wide domestic abuse mobility scheme.

To assist with implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 the Council took part in a Surrey County Council project in which the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) standards of practice were shared, and our own practices were health checked to ensure good practice.

Prison Leavers and Ex-offenders

The homelessness review has shown that Housing Services is increasing working with a rising number of prison leavers and ex-offender clients. This group are identified as the fifth most common support need for single homeless people.

People in this group frequently have multiple and complex needs and can be hard to engage. There is strong links between offending and mental ill-health, substance misuse, estrangement from family, lack of support network, and rough sleeping. Some are repeat offenders which is linked to repeat homelessness applications.

Surrey Probation Service has a dedicated Housing Officer who liaises with each Council's Housing department to ensure prison release process runs as smoothly as possible. Key to this is the Duty to Refer process which assist with early discussions regarding housing issues when preparing for a prisoners' release and which assists in effectively managing homelessness applications from ex-offenders. The Council also has nominated lead officers who attends CHARM, MAPPA and MARAC meetings.

In 2021/22 the 11 Surrey Districts and Boroughs were successful in securing AFEO funding to assist certain ex-offenders to secure private rented accommodation. AFEO ensures a county wide base line offer which includes a rent deposit; rent in advance on a loan basis; a cash incentive to landlords; a furniture package sum; top up amounts between LHA and market rents and a top up for those affected by the Single Room rent who would benefit from accessing self-contained accommodation. In addition, the Council has SLA with Forward Trust to assist in rehousing single homeless people, including ex-offenders, to access private rented accommodation.

This complements the work underway at the National Probation Service to procure and provide CAS 3 type accommodation in Kent, Surrey and Sussex which is made available for a period of up to 12 weeks, to prison leavers homeless on release or leaving other prison managed premises and homeless.

Despite this, ex-offenders are one of the hard groups to assist with rehousing as it is more difficult to source accommodation for those with an offending history especially for certain types of offenders, such as arsonists.

At a national level the number of patients discharged from hospital with no settled accommodation to return to has been rising each year. These people are at high risk of homelessness and rough sleeping.

The HRA places a duty on hospital trusts, emergency departments and urgent treatment centres to refer people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless within 56 days, to their local council. Duty to Refer can provide an effective mechanism for non-housing agencies to secure housing advice and assistance for individuals under their care.

The 11 Surrey districts and boroughs have a County wide Hospital discharge protocol for clients with mental health needs from acute wards with named hospital discharge coordinators. This enables us to engage with those at risk of homelessness at the earliest opportunity.

However, the picture is more complex with A&E's and general wards and currently there is no formal Hospital discharge protocol in place. Through the work of the Surrey the Homeless Multi-agency Group (MAG), a discharge from hospital work group has been set up to try to address this. In the meantime, A&E's and general wards are encouraged to use the Duty to Refer process so not to have a unplanned hospital discharge.

Rough Sleepers

Support services for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping are outlined under Key Objective 2 of this strategy.

Armed Forces Personnel

It is recognised that armed forces personnel face particular difficulties when re-establishing themselves into the community after they leave the services, and accessing suitable housing is no exception. This is reflected in members of the armed forces being over-represented nationally among rough sleepers.

Along with most local authorities, the Council has signed up to an Armed Forces Community Covenant to reflect its commitment to the particular needs of such people. In line with this, the Council's Housing Allocation Policy sets out how applications for social housing from former armed forces personnel are dealt with. Such people are exempted, for example, from the need to meet the local connection qualifying criteria that apply to all other applicants. Additional priority is also given to bids from armed forces personnel who are in housing need.

However, the numbers in Epsom & Ewell are low. There are currently only 8 applicants on the Council's Housing Needs Register who are recorded as having been in the armed forces. Occasionally there is an approach from someone who is homeless, but again the numbers are very low. The Council will liaise with charitable organisations such as SSAFA to support any homeless applicants who have been members of the Armed Forces to ensure they receive the support they need.

11. Consultation

In drafting the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy we have undertaken public consultation with our staff and residents; service users; local support services; the voluntary sector and housing providers. The consultation was in the form of focus groups and on-line questionnaires.

12. Resourcing the Strategy

Many of the actions within the Action plan are administrative and procedural and will involve officer time. These will be prioritised and spread over the 5-year life span of the strategy.

Currently the Council receives Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) (formally MHCLG) annual Homelessness Prevention Grant. This grant is used to pay for the temporary accommodation management fee with our RSL temporary accommodations providers, some staffing costs and some homeless prevention measures such as the Rent Deposit Scheme.

We will develop a programme for the dispersal of s106 affordable housing funding to provide additional social/affordable, supported and temporary accommodation.

We will ensure that we apply for any further funding bids the Government launch that are appropriate to meeting the needs of our borough. We will also explore other funding streams with partners where appropriate.

13. Monitoring and Review

The multi-agency Homelessness Forum will meet annually to review the Action Plan, monitor progress towards meeting the aims of the new strategy and to develop ideas for future action.

Responsibility for driving through this strategy and ensuring that it delivers key objectives lies with the Council's Strategic Housing Manager.

14. The Action Plan

Delivery of the Strategy will be supported by an action plan, which sets out the individual actions and activities to be undertaken and details how the Council will achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy. This Action Plan is set out in appendix 2.

15. Equality Impact Assessment

In drafting the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan we have undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment. It is anticipated that the strategy and action plan will have a positive impact for all protected groups both directly and indirectly and the EIA has found that there are no indications that either the strategy or action plan will have negative impacts for any protected groups.

The strategy and action plan will ensure that the Council's statutory homelessness services continue remain fully accessible to persons with protected characteristics and support the delivery of targeted and appropriate support services where required. A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment is available on the Council's website.

16. Publication

A copy of this Strategy is available on the Council's website and is available on request at the Council's offices. A paper copy can also be provided upon request.

A copy can be made available in a different language, large print and braille on request.

18. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Homelessness Review 2022

Appendix 3 - Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan

1.3	Research customer journeys into homelessness to identify early opportunities to prevent their homelessness and any barriers to doing	Housing Options Manager	2024/5	
1.4	Housing Services to deliver briefings to colleagues, professionals and elected members to provide up to date information about housing and homelessness to ensure that correct information is disseminated to residents	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	Annually	
1.5	Further develop partnership working with the DWP and local jobcentre plus to strengthen referrals and manage the impact of universal credit	Housing Options Manager	On-going	
1.6	Encourage early identification and interventions from public sector partners, community and voluntary sector organisations who are able to effectively inform those at risk of homelessness to seek advice from EEBC	Housing Options Manager	2023/4	
1.7	Review and update housing options information & pathway plans ensuring the customer has access to accurate, useful and comprehensive information about housing options	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	2023/24	
1.8	Review & simplify the tasks for PHPs and accompanying advice literature.	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	2023/24	
1.9	Publicise and promote the Council's prevention services more effectively in an accessible format and encourage residents to contact us early and before a crisis, ensuring customers know how and where to approach and what to expect from the service	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	2024/25	
1.10	Review use of social media and how we communicate our services to the wider general public for example Facebook, twitter, chat pages	Housing Options Manager	2024/25	
1.11	Devise an early identification & intervention protocol with all Registered Providers to address factors such as arrears, anti-social behaviour and tenancy sustainment	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	2024/5	
1.12	Work with Private Sector Landlords and Lettings Agents to develop early signposting protocols for tenants with arrears or other tenancy concerns, to the Housing Options Service, to prevent homelessness	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	2024/5	
1.13	Review the referrals received through Duty to Refer to establish where further work needs to be completed in terms of links and training	Housing Options Manager	Annually	
1.14	Explore a trauma-informed & motivational interviewing approach to the delivery of homelessness services	Housing Options Manager	2023/24	
1.15	Identify training needs and delivery training to meet any skill gaps and updates on new legislation and case law	Housing Options Manager	On-going	
1.16	Ensure flexible use of the Council's Homelessness Prevention fund	Housing Solutions Manager	On-going	

Key Objective 2 - Reduce Rough Sleeping

No.	Action: What we will do?	Lead	Target Date	Status
2.1	Further develop the Ending Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan	Housing Solutions Manager	2023/24	

2.2	Continue to work with eSOS partners to maintain the provision of effective Outreach Services	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	On-going	
2.3	Deliver SWEP provision annually to prevent rough sleeping during severe weather	Housing Options Manager	On-going	Achieved
2.4	Provide eSOS assessment beds	Housing Options Manager	On-going	Achieved
2.5	Explore a 'Housing First' model for the most vulnerable homeless applicants	Housing Solutions Manager	2022/23 2023/24	
2.6	Conduct a promotional campaign to the residents of EEBC to provide information and awareness on rough sleeping and promote good practice amongst the general public to prevent people becoming entrenched into street life	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	2024/25	
2.7	Review accommodation and health support needs of single people with complex needs or challenging behaviours who experience recurring homelessness	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	2024/25	
2.8	Develop a No Second Night Out approach to prevent all rough sleeping	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	2023/24	
2.9	Apply for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding to create a new post of Single Person Homeless Support Officer to work solely with Rough Sleepers and single homeless people at risk of rough sleeping	Housing Solutions Manager	Feb 2022	Achieved
2.10	With our East Surrey Partners apply for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding to enhance the ESOS Outreach Service	Housing Solutions Manager	Feb 2022	Achieved
2.11	Look to implement corporate "sponsorship" of up to 5 people with more complex and longer-term patterns of rough sleeping at requested by DLUHC	Strategic Housing Manager	2024/25	

Key Objective 3 - Increase accommodation options: Social Rented Housing; Private Rented Accommodation; Supported and move-on Accommodation; In-borough Temporary Accommodation

	Acton: What we will do?	Lead	Target Date	Status
Social Rented Housing				
3.1	Address the housing needs of the borough, including affordable housing needs, through the development of our Local Plan	Planning/ Strategic Housing Group	On-going	
3.2	Review of planning policies to be addressed through Local Plan to deliver more social/affordable, supported & temporary accommodation	Planning/ Strategic Housing Group	2022/23 2023/24 On-going	
3.4	Work with Homes England to identify opportunities for the use of the Affordable Homes Programme 2021 to 2026 to fund Council developments of new affordable housing	Strategic Housing Manager	2023/24 On-going	
3.5	Identify opportunities for the development of social/ affordable/temporary accommodation on Council owned sites. List of sites being prepared	Planning/ Strategic Housing Group	On-going	

3.23	Work with local social landlords to investigate developing a trial of a Housing First style approach	Housing Solutions Manager	2022/23 2023/24	
3.24	Work with Transform Housing & Support to deliver 4 units of supported move- on accommodation for Rough Sleepers, funded through Rough Sleeper Accommodation Program (RSAP) and the Homes England Move-On Fund	Housing Solutions Manager	2022/23 2023/24	
In-borough Temporary Accommodation				
3.25	Review the supply of temporary accommodation and identify future local temporary accommodation needs and how these can be best met	Housing Solutions Manager / Strategic Housing Manager	2022/23 2023/24	
3.26	Review and update temporary accommodation procurement plan	Housing Solutions Manager / Strategic Housing Manager	2023/24	
3.27	Review and update the temporary accommodation placement policy	Housing Solutions Manager / Strategic Housing Manager	2023/24	
3.28	Increase the number of private sector leasing scheme properties	Housing Solutions Manager	2022/23 2023/24	
3.29	Work with Sanctuary Housing to develop up to 14 units of in-borough temporary accommodation at Defoe Court.	Housing Solutions Manager	2022/23	Achieved

Key Objective 4 - Improve the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people

No.	Action: What we will do?	Lead	Target Date	Status
4.1	Develop a make every contact matter ethos across the service and with partners	Housing Options Manager	2026/27	
4.2	Work with applicants to build on their own skills and strengths to develop their resilience and self-sufficiency.	Housing Solutions Manager	2025/26	
4.3	Work closely with the SCC Public Health and Health Services to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable homeless people, especially those with multiple & complex needs through the work of the Surrey Homeless Multi-Agency Group (MAG).	Housing Solutions Manager	On-going	
4.4	Work in partnership with Surrey Adults Matter (SAM) to focus on delivering better coordinated services to improve the lives of adults facing Severe Multiple Disadvantage	Housing Options Manager	On-going	
4.5	Work with SCC Public Health/SAM to pilot the "Bridge the Gap" trauma informed Outreach Support Service for homeless people	Housing Options Manager	On-going	

Key Objective 5 - Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people

No.	Action: What we will do?	Lead	Target Date	Status
5.1	Ensure there is a clear documented housing pathway for groups who need specialist support, including each of the specified groups.	Housing Solutions Manager	2022/23	Achieved

5.2	Review the internal and external support services provided and explore opportunities to provide a more targeted and efficient service, particularly to those with complex needs to intervene early to prevent recurring homelessness.	Housing Solutions Manager	2024/25	
5.3	Continue to fund and work with our East Surrey partners and Thames Reach to provide a specialist outreach support services for rough sleepers.	Housing Solutions Manager	On-going	
5.4	Continue to support those households to access employment, education and training through continuing to fund ETHOS and through working with the Employment Hub.	Housing Solutions Manager	On-going	
5.5	Ensure that homeless households have the skills required to maintain a tenancy.	Housing Solutions Manager	2025/26	
5.6	Continue to work with tenancy sustainment and floating support services to ensure that those households placed in temporary accommodation are receiving appropriate support and assistance.	Housing Options Manager	On-going	
5.7	Work with SCC to review our current provision of Housing Related Support provision.	Housing Solutions Manager	Annually	
5.8	Proactively work with households in temporary accommodation to identify and secure suitable alternative accommodation and ensure that each household has a move on plan. Investigate options of having a dedicated Housing Officer to support homelessness households once in temporary accommodation.	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	2022/23 2023/24	
5.9	For some homeless households there are issues that prevent move on from temporary accommodation. There are a variety of reasons for this which include; the benefit cap, history of rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, offending, complex health issues and other risk issues that make both social and private landlords reluctant to accept them as tenants. We will identify these issues and put in place measures to try to address them.	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	2024/5	
5.10	Continue to support homeless household to find and secure private rented accommodation through the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme.	Housing Solutions Manager	On-going	
5.11	Offer tenancy support and sustainment to households who are assisted to access private rented accommodation via the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme.	Housing Solutions Manager	On-going	
5.12	Continue to support individuals and families that experience domestic abuse.	Housing Options Manager	On-going	
5.13	Continue to fund the Sanctuary Scheme to help victims of domestic abuse safely to remain in their homes.	Housing Solutions Manager	On-going	
5.14	Identify support needs at an early stage and refer to appropriate services (drug/alcohol, mental health, young persons, domestic abuse, ex-offenders, money advice, employment support, floating support, foodbank, CAB).	Housing Options Manager	2023/4	
5.15	Promote resilience and support to those who are or used to be homeless, to improve their resilience and reduce the risk of them from becoming homeless again.	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	2025/6	
5.16	Work with Children's Services and the Family Support team to identify families who need some additional help beyond accommodation needs and ensure arrangements are in place to refer households with children to Early Help/Family Support as early as possible.	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	2024/5	
5.17	Work with partners to identify tenants at risk of "cuckooing" and ensure rapid interventions are in place to support them.	Housing Options Manager	On- going	
5.18	Work in partnership with Surrey Adults Matter (SAM) to focus on delivering better coordinated services to improve the lives of adults facing Severe Multiple Disadvantage	Housing Options Manager	2022/23 2023/24	
5.19	Make referrals to furniture projects to ensure that homeless households have a furniture offer when moving into new accommodation	Housing Options Manager	On-going	Achieved

Key Objective 6 - Partnership working

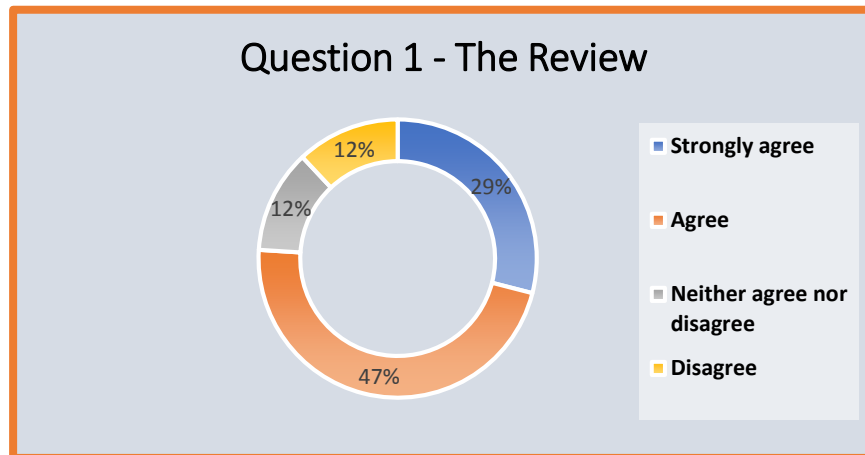
No.	Action: What we will do?	Lead	Target Date	Status
6.1	Increase partnership working and make “homelessness Everybody’s Business”, raise awareness of the impact homelessness can have on households and ensure that all agencies know how to appropriately refer households into the Housing Options Service.	Housing Options Manager & Housing Solutions Manager	2024/25	
6.2	Host an annual Homelessness forum with partner agencies.	Strategic Housing Manager	2023/24 then annually	
6.3	Host an annual Registered Provider Forum with a focus upon support for tenants at risk of homelessness.	Strategic Housing Manager	2023/24 then annually	
6.4	Host an annual Private Landlord’s Forum to increase the availability of private rented accommodation in the borough and to encourage good practice.	Homelessness working group	2024/25 then annually	
6.5	Work in partnership to ensure appropriate multi-agency joint working and referral arrangements are in place for Housing Options Service and to explore how preventative services can be developed and improved.	Housing Options Manager	On-going	
6.6	Promote more joined up working with, health, prison and probation services to prevent homelessness on discharge or release from an institution	Housing Options Manager	2022/3 On-going	
6.7	Work closely with the SCC Public Health and Health Services to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable homeless people	Housing Options Manager	2022/3 On-going	
6.8	Further develop partnership working with the DWP and local Jobcentre plus to ensure the Housing Options Service has access to information and receive regular updates, including training on UC and other benefits.	Housing Options Manager	2022/3 On-going	Achieved
6.9	Maximise funding opportunities through partnership working to identify and bid for new initiatives, building upon recent successes (e.g. MEAM, Housing First, RSI, Next Steps and RSAP).	Strategic Housing Manager	2023/24 On-going	
6.10	Work with partners to identify how those with lived experience of homelessness can be included in the design and delivery of services.	Housing Options Manager	2024/5	
6.11	Campaign and raise awareness of issues of homelessness that are linked to affordability and to LHA rates and Benefit Cap.	Strategic Housing Manager	2024/25	
6.12	Work with our Surrey partners in implementing the Domestic Abuse Act	Housing Options Manager	2022/3 On-going	
6.13	Work with our Surrey partners and Children Services in reviewing and implementing the Joint Housing Protocol for 16 & 17 year olds & the Care Leavers Protocol	Housing Options Manager	2022/3	Achieved
6.14	Work closely with our Surrey partners and Health Services to review and implement the Mental Health Protocol and the Hospital Discharge Protocol	Housing Options Manager	2022/3	Achieved

The Homelessness Review

Question 1 - The Homelessness Review

Does the Homelessness Review, as a whole, reflect the issues and challenges within the borough of Epsom & Ewell in dealing with homelessness and rough sleeping?

76% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed that the Homelessness Review reflected the issues and challenges within the borough of Epsom & Ewell in dealing with homelessness and rough sleeping.

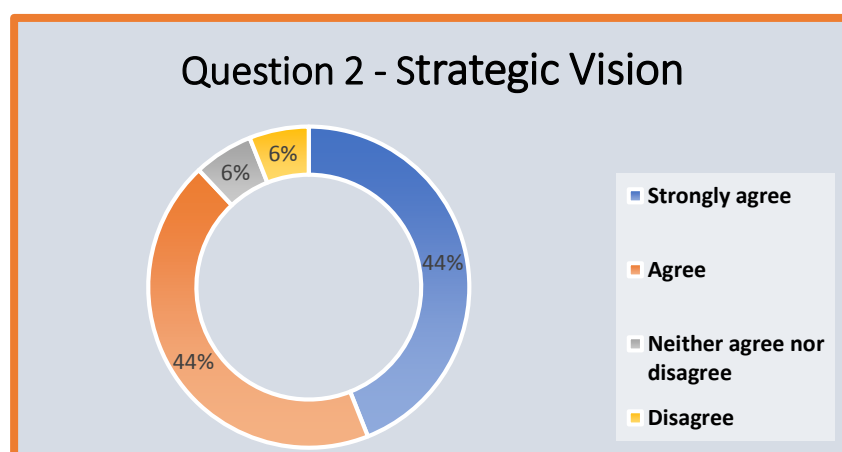


Our Strategic Vision

Question 2 - The Strategic Vision

Our strategic vision is to see: “The council and its partners working collaboratively to prevent homelessness, to proactively reduce and end rough sleeping, assist homeless households to find affordable housing solutions and ensure the right support is available to promote recovery and improve health and wellbeing.” To what extent do you agree with this vision?

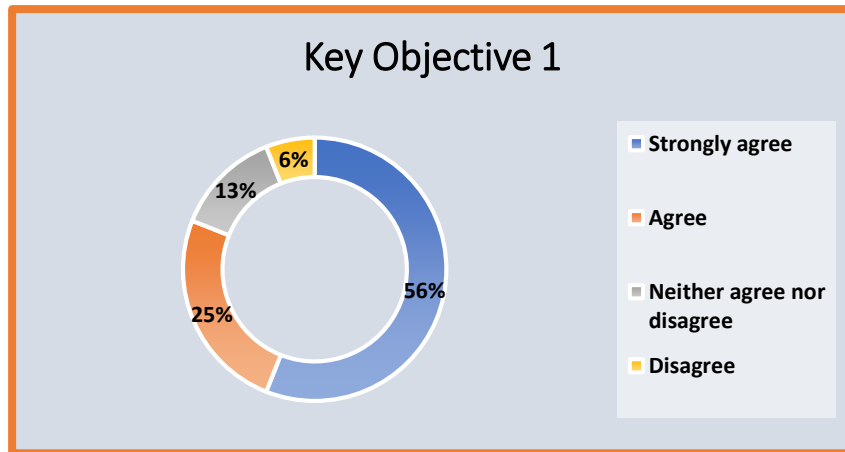
88% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed with the Council’s proposed strategic vision for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.



The Six Key Objectives

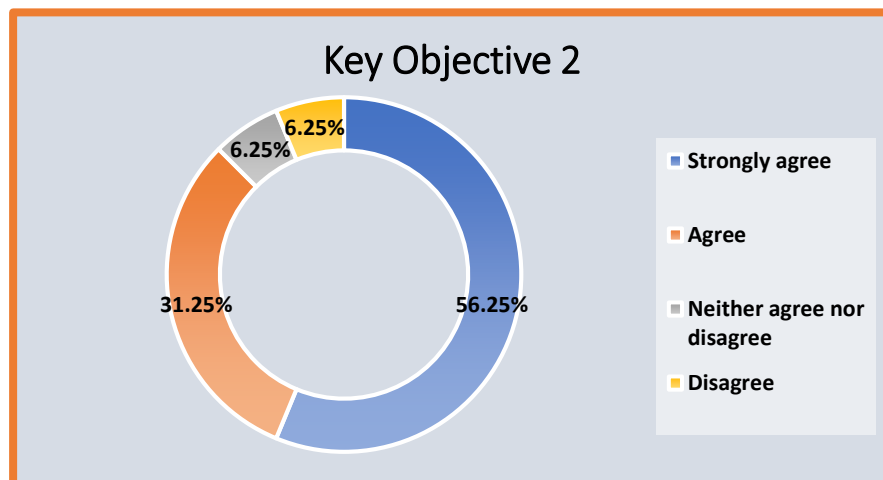
Question 4 - Key Objective 1 - The early identification, intervention & prevention of homelessness: To what extent do you agree with Key Objective 1?

81% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed with the early identification, intervention & prevention of homelessness being a key objective.



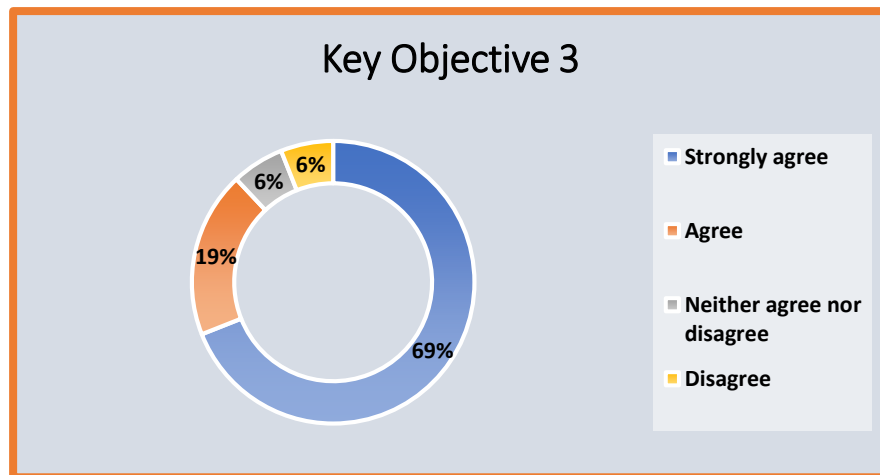
Question 5 - Key Objective 2 - Reduce Rough Sleeping: To what extent do you agree with Key Objective 2?

87.5% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed with the key objective of reducing rough sleeping.



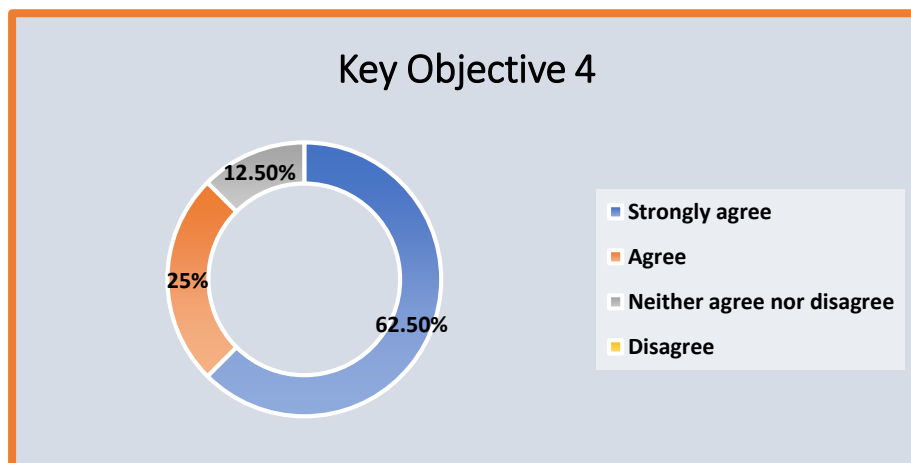
Question 6 - Key Objective 3 – Increase accommodation options within; Social Rented Housing; Private Rented Accommodation; Supported and move-on Accommodation and Temporary Accommodation within the borough: To what extent do you agree with Key Objective 3?

88% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed with this key objective.



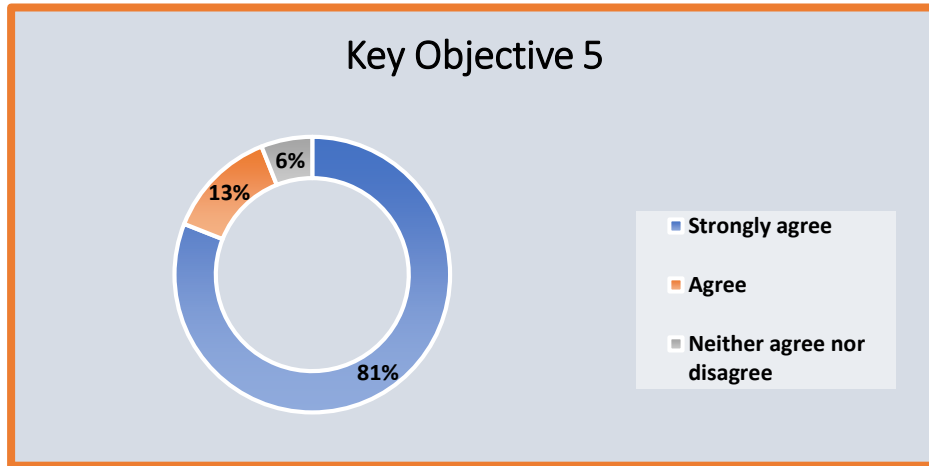
Question 7 - Key Objective 4 - Improve the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people: To what extent do you agree with Key Objective 4?

87.5% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed with the key objective of improving the health & wellbeing of homeless people.



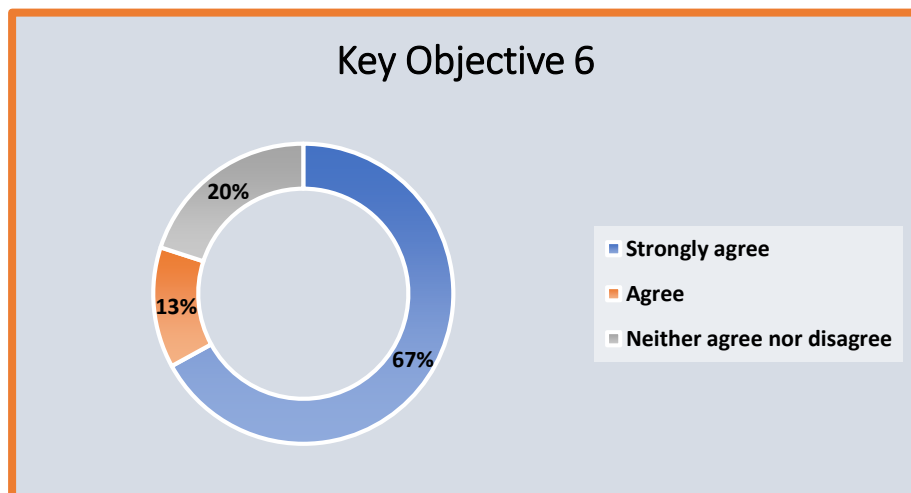
Question 8 - Key Objective 5 - Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people: To what extent do you agree with Key Objective 5?

94% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed with this key objective.



Question 9 - Key Objective 6 - Partnership working: To what extent do you agree with Key Objective 6?

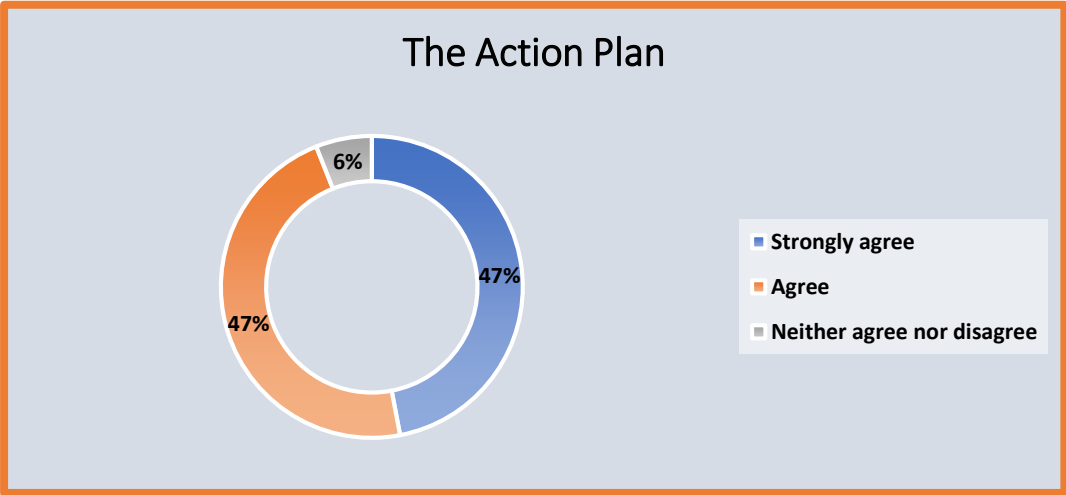
80% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed with the partnership working being a key objective.



The Action Plan

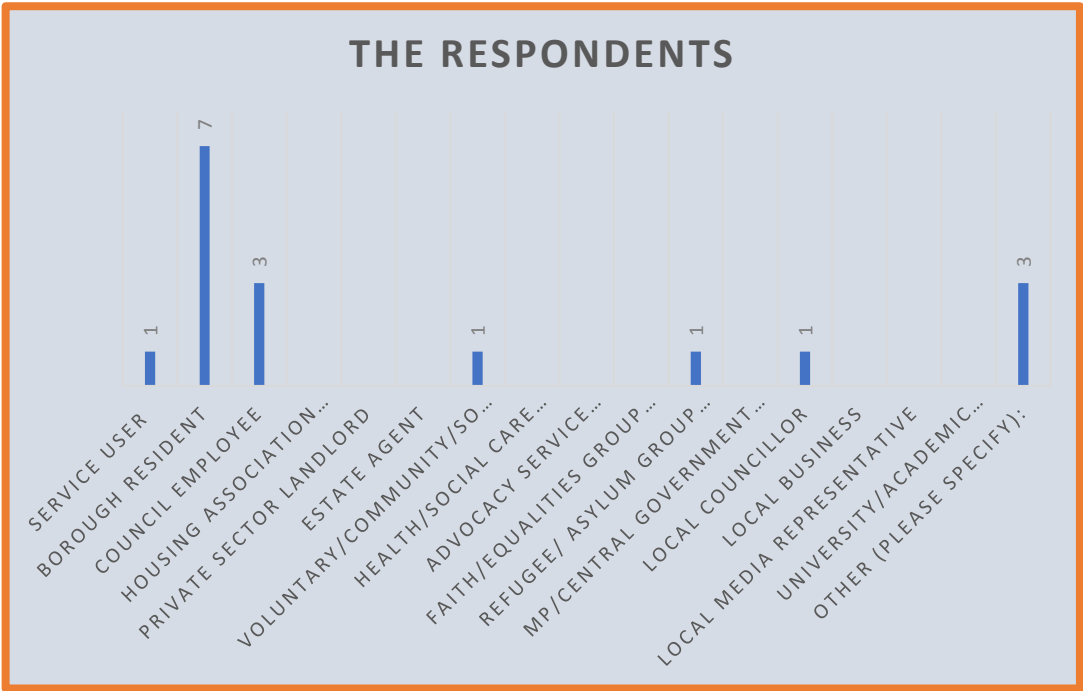
Question 10 - Does the Action plan as a whole explain the future planned work to be undertaken across the Borough to reduce and prevent homelessness?

94% of respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed that the Action Plan is focused on the right actions and activities, and explained the work being undertaken across Epsom & Ewell to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.



Question 11 - Make up of respondents

The respondents were asked in what capacity they were undertaking the on-line questionnaire. The chart below outlines their makeup.



Free text questions

Overwhelmingly, the comments did not state alternative priorities/objectives, but rather provided more detail on issues they felt needed to be prioritised or emphasised within the strategy and action plan. The comments made were grouped together into a number of themes. A list of the themes raised is presented below along with the general comments:

Causes of Homelessness

- The main cause of homelessness is the lack of affordable housing, due to a chronic shortage of social housing and high private rents, leaving a large and growing number of local residents without any realistic housing options. While this is a national issue, this is particularly acute in this borough due to the relatively low proportion of social housing and the very high level of private rents. This situation is exacerbated by a social security system that does not provide adequate housing support to those on low incomes, particularly to those affected by the bedroom tax and the benefit cap, as well as the two-child limit.
- Tackle root causes of homelessness - such as drug/alcohol addiction and mental health issues.
- Low income, poverty and insecure employment contributes to homelessness.
- Affordability of accommodation & lack of supply.
- Homes for Ukraine, cost of living (notable increase in referrals to Social Prescribing for housing) and lack of affordable housing in the borough.

Affordability of private rented sector

- There is not enough affordable private rent accommodation.
- There is a need to tackle the gap between LHA and private sector rents as Housing Benefit levels do not meet market rents and large shortfall.
- Offering more Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to cover the gap between market rents and the LHA.
- Lobbying for an increase in LHA rates.
- Private rented housing is too expensive and inaccessible for most people.
- Private rents should be capped.
- The Benefit Cap prevents many people being able to access private rented accommodation.
- Need to work more proactively with private landlords to increase the stock of genuinely affordable private rented accommodation for those on benefits.

- The Council should do more to make the private rented sector a realistic option for homeless households in the short-term, as well as expanding the supply of social rented accommodation in the medium- and long-term.

Supply Social Housing /Temporary Accommodation

- There is not enough social Housing for those in need and it takes too long for people to get house.
- The Council should play a more proactive role in matching under-occupying households who want to move to a smaller property with overcrowded families who want to move to a larger property.
- Need to develop more affordable housing/ housing association housing.
- Covert office to residential properties.
- Need for more and better-quality temporary accommodated that is located in the borough. This would especially help those with children, to maintain their support networks and continue to attend local schools.
- No family with children should be placed out-of-borough and away from their support networks for an extended and indefinite period of time.
- More supported accommodation that actually meets the needs of homeless people.

Support/Health & Wellbeing

- Keep homeless applicants better informed on the progress of their Homelessness and Housing Register applications.
- Households in temporary accommodation should have an allocated Housing Officer who meets with them regularly to review their housing situation.
- Need to have more personalise support as every family/person has different challenges.
- There is a lack of community support for homeless people with mental health issues.
- The need for adequate support services. Access to appropriate and timely drug, alcohol and mental health treatments.
- The Housing Services should treat homelessness people with kindness, compassion, respect & dignity. They should be listened to with empathy, especially when they first approach the housing department for support. Further staff training is needed to ensure that homeless people presenting to the Council's housing department are always treated with the respect and compassion they deserve.

Focus Group feedback

Three focus groups were held; one with Housing Services staff on 10 July 2022; one with Rosebery Housing Association on 7 September 2022 and another with the community & voluntary sector on 8 September 2022. A Member's briefing will be held on 24 November 2022.

The strategy and action plan were generally positively received. The focus group with Rosebery Housing Association gave the opportunity to look at common workstreams within the action plan so we could explore joint working to delivery these. The Voluntary and Community sector found the review data useful in understanding the pressures relating to homelessness in the borough.

Through the use of the Homelessness forum, we will continue to regularly engage with partners and service users during the 5-year life of the Strategy and Action plan.

How the consultation feedback has helped to shape the strategy:

The consultation responses have informed the strategy and action plan in the following areas:

The Action Plan has already identified the workstreams outlined below and we will look to prioritise and initiate these within year one.

- Investigate ways to assist and / or incentivise social housing tenants under occupying larger family homes to downsize
- Proactively work with households in temporary accommodation to identify and secure suitable alternative accommodation and ensure that each household has a move on plan. Investigate options of having a dedicated Housing Officer to support homelessness households once in temporary accommodation
- Explore a trauma-informed / motivational interviewing approach to the delivery of homelessness services.

Conclusion

The consultation generally received very positive responses, with the vision, objectives & action plan priorities very well received by the respondents.

All six of the key objectives received at least 80% support, which represents an extremely positive reaction.

The specific actions of each priority were also very well supported, with 94% positive response, which suggests the Council is correct in its approach to addressing the identified issues.

The questionnaires responses and suggestions from the consultation, as well as feedback from the focus groups, will be used to refine the strategy and action plan.

We thank all those who took the time to respond to the consultation.



Stage 1 EIA Tracking ⁱ	
Title of EIA	Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan - 2022-2027
Lead Officer	Annette Snell, Housing Solutions Manager
Division	Housing & Community
Publication Date (if applicable)	November 2022, depending on the strategy and action plan being adopted at Community and Wellbeing on 24 November 2022
EIA Review Date (only applicable when completing the full EIA)	November 2023



Stage 2 Details of Policy, Service or Functionⁱⁱ

Provide an overview of the policy, service or other function being introduced or reviewed.

Please include the aim or purpose of the policy, service or function etc., any context, changes proposed and the desired outcome. You will need to start to think about the equality implications and whether there is potential for impact on residents, service users and staff (as applicable) with one or more of the protected characteristics.

The Council is required under the Homelessness Act 2002 to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan.

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan sets out how Epsom & Ewell Borough Council intends to meet the needs of our residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including rough sleeping and single people over the next five years (2022-27). The strategy outlines the Council's strategic vision and the key objectives we aim to achieve when addressing homelessness within the borough.

The Council's strategic vision is to see: *"The Council and its partners working collaboratively to prevent homelessness, to proactively reduce and end rough sleeping, assist homeless households to find affordable housing solutions and ensure the right support is available to promote recovery and improve health and wellbeing."*

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has identified six key objectives for the next five years.

1. The early identification, intervention & prevention of homelessness
2. Reduce Rough Sleeping
3. Increase accommodation options including social rented, private rented, supported and move on accommodation and in borough temporary accommodation
4. Improve the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people
5. Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people
6. Partnership working

Delivery of the Strategy is supported by an Action Plan, which is structured around the six key objectives. The Action Plan sets out the individual actions and activities to be undertaken and details how the Council will achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy.



Stage 3 Relevance Checkⁱⁱⁱ

<p>Indicate whether the policy, function or service change etc. outlined in Stage 2 above has the potential to impact on people with a protected characteristic (covers service users, the wider community and staff).</p> <p>If yes, a full EIA needs to be completed (<i>please go to Stage 4</i>).</p> <p>If no, please set out your reasoning and then secure sign-off by your Head of Service and the Inclusion and Diversity Group at Stage 8.</p>	<p>Homelessness disproportionately affects people on low to modest incomes and those who are vulnerable due to physical or mental disability, learning disabilities, those suffering domestic abuse, young people and care leavers, older people, ex-offenders and substance misusers.</p> <p>The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan have been deliberately designed to meet the needs of and support all those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It is anticipated it will have a positive impact for all protected groups both directly and indirectly and the EIA has found that there are no indications that either the strategy or action plan will have negative impacts for any protected groups.</p> <p>The strategy and action plan will ensure that the Council's statutory homelessness services continue remain fully accessible to persons with protected characteristics and support the delivery of targeted and appropriate support services where required.</p> <p>Failure to deliver the strategy and action plan may, however, have negative consequences for some protected groups as it has been designed to meet identified needs.</p>
--	--

Stage 4 Data Relevant to Full EIA^{iv}

<p>List all data (including source) and other information relevant to the full equality impact assessment</p>	<p>In developing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 to 2027 and Action Plan a detailed review of homelessness in Epsom & Ewell has been undertaken.</p> <p>The purpose of the Homelessness Review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the area, identifying future trends and any gaps in the service currently being provided. The review has considered a range of information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of homeless approaches • Reasons for homelessness • Homeless Prevention and Relief cases and outcomes • Support needs of homeless households • The type of individuals and households becoming homeless • Households in nightly paid accommodation & in-borough temporary accommodation • Supply and Demand of Affordable housing - Housing Needs Register and social housing lettings • Private rented housing & the Rent Deposit Scheme
---	--



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness • The current Housing Options Service & existing homelessness prevention measures <p>The data set used to undertake this review was from information extracted from the Council's Abritas Housing System for the period 2018/19 up to quarter 3, 2021/22 and is based on Homelessness Case Level Collection data (H-CLIC).</p> <p>The Homelessness Review provides comprehensive information to develop the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 to 2027. The full findings of the Homelessness Review document can be viewed on the Council's website.</p>
Specify all engagement activities undertaken	<p>The Council carried out six weeks public consultation between 12 July and 23 August 2022 with a range of stakeholders, service users, staff and residents. These included:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeless applicants Residents Staff Housing Association partners including Rosebery, Transform, Mount Green & PA Epsom CAB Epsom Foodbank Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network Adult Social Care, Children Services, Mental Health Service Surrey Adults Matter/Bridge the Gap Drug & Alcohol Services Hospital Discharge Co-ordinator Probation Service North Surrey Domestic Abuse Service DWP/Job Centre + Surrey Life Long Learning Partnership/ETHOS East Surrey Outreach Service Local Faith groups Various community & voluntary sector groups <p>The consultation took the form of an on-line questionnaire, focus groups and a Member's briefing.</p> <p>The on-line questionnaire and accompanying strategy documents were emailed to the stakeholders listed above. In addition, 250 homeless applicants on the Housing Need Register were asked to participate. A paper version of the questionnaire was available on request.</p>



	<p>Three focus groups were held; one with Housing Services staff on 10 July 2022; one with Rosebery Housing Association on 7 September 2022 and another with the community & voluntary sector on 8 September 2022. A Member's briefing will be held on 24 November 2022.</p> <p>The consultation generally received very positive responses, with the vision, objectives & action plan priorities very well received by the respondents.</p> <p>All six of the key objectives received at least 80% support, which represents an extremely positive reaction.</p> <p>The specific actions of each priority were also very well supported, with 94% positive response, which suggests the Council is correct in its approach to addressing the identified issues.</p>
--	--

Stage 5 Impact on Residents, Service Users and Staff with Protected Characteristics^v

Undertake a full analysis which details all positive and negative impact arising from the policy, service or other function. If there will be no impact, make this clear by completing the relevant box. Please ensure that you evidence your conclusions with reference to the appropriate source.

Protected Characteristic	Potential Positive Impact	Potential Negative Impact	No Impact
Age	<p>Positive Impact The Housing Options service is available to everyone from the age of 16+.</p> <p>Certain age groups i.e. 16/17's and the elderly are more likely to have priority need if homeless by virtue of their age.</p> <p>Young people aged 16-17 and care leavers receive enhanced services via the Surrey wide Joint Protocols. Younger people who have been in the care of the local authority are considered vulnerable.</p>	No Negative Impact	N/A



<i>Disability</i>	<p>Positive Impact The Housing Options Service is available to all regardless of disability.</p> <p>The homelessness legislation protects people with disabilities in that the Council must assess whether they are vulnerable and in priority need under the legislation. Homeless applicants with a disability may be more likely to have a priority need.</p> <p>Improving the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people is as one the key objectives of the strategy and there are specific actions and services that are targeted at people with disabilities.</p>	No Negative Impact	N/A
<i>Gender Reassignment</i>	<p>Positive Impact The Housing Options Service is available to all regardless of gender reassignment. There would be no discrimination made as a result of this relevant characteristic. The legislation protects those who are considered to be vulnerable. Homeless applicants undergoing gender reassignment may be more likely to have a priority need.</p>	No Negative Impact	N/A
<i>Pregnancy and Maternity</i>	<p>Positive Impact The Housing Options Service is available to all regardless of pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Families expecting a child are protected by the homelessness legislation as they will have a priority need. Many of the strategies key objectives and actions will offer targeted and appropriate support services for households with dependent children or who are pregnant.</p>	No Negative Impact	N/A
<i>Race</i>		No Negative Impact	<p>No Impact The Housing Options Service is available to all regardless of race. The legislation protects those who are considered to be vulnerable and in priority need.</p>



			Monitoring shows that the ethnic origin of homeless households appears to largely reflect the demography of the borough.
<i>Religion and Belief</i>		No Negative Impact	No Impact The Housing Options Service is available to all regardless of religion or belief. The legislation protects those who are considered to be vulnerable and in priority need.
<i>Sex</i>	<p>Positive Impact</p> <p>The Housing Options Services available to all, regardless of sex. The legislation protects those who are considered to be vulnerable and in priority need.</p> <p>Lone parent households are at a higher risk of homelessness, and these are more likely to be headed by women. Dependent children and pregnancy are factors conferring priority status under the homelessness legislation. Many of the strategies key objectives and actions will offer targeted and appropriate support services for households with dependent children or who are pregnant.</p> <p>Rough sleeping is more common amongst men than women, however, for women, the impact can often be worse. Our strategy aims to significantly reduce rough sleeping and offers targeted and specialised support services where required.</p>	No Negative Impact	
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>		No Negative Impact	No Impact The Housing Options Service is available to all regardless of sexual orientation. The legislation protects those who are



Stage 7 EIA – Action Plan^{vii}

Please specify any action that will be taken to support implementation of your decision

Issue Identified	Action required	Implementation Date	Responsible Officer
Homelessness Review Data	The data within the Homelessness Review will be updated, evaluated and monitored annually	Annually - May 2023	Annette Snell
Delivery of the Strategy and Action plan	Annual monitoring on the delivery of the strategy and Action plan	Nov 2023	Annette Snell
Stage 8 EIA Sign Off ^{viii}			
Head of Service: Rod Brown		Date:	
Inclusion & Diversity Group:		Date:	

Page 87

Guidance on completing the Equality Impact Assessment Template

- i **Stage 1 - EIA Tracking**
Insert appropriate details. A review date will only be required when completing the full equality impact assessment (Stages 1 – 8).
- ii **Stage 2 - Details of Service / Policy / Function to be assessed**
In this section you will need to provide information which explains the subject matter of the work you are undertaking. If a new policy is being developed then explain what the policy covers and what it sets out to achieve. If a policy is being reviewed, then once again explain what the policy addresses and highlight any changes that are being introduced. If the work you are undertaking involves a service change, outline what the current service provides and to whom, then discuss the changes that are proposed and what the outcome of these service changes are anticipated to be.



Bear in mind when drafting this section (and the rest of the document) that a lay person, unfamiliar with the subject matter should be able to read it and understand the policy, function or service and any changes that are proposed.

iii

Stage 3 – Relevance Check

The relevance check asks you to complete an initial assessment of whether the new / reviewed policy, service or function proposed is anticipated to impact upon residents, service users or staff with a protected characteristic. If you consider that there will be some form of impact then you must go on to complete all other stages of the form (Stages 4 – 8 inclusive). If, however, there will be no impact, provide your justification in the space provided and seek formal sign off of your assessment (Stage 8). The form should then be kept in case you need to provide evidence at a later date that you had due regard to the three aims of the equality duty during policy development / service design. If you have any uncertainty at this stage of the process, go on to complete all sections of the Equality Impact Assessment Template (Stages 1-8).

iv

Stage 4 - Data Relevant to Full EIA

In order to undertake a full assessment of the equality implications associated with your project/work you will need to outline the data that you possess which will help you to understand any resultant impact. If you identify any gaps in your information, and thereby have gaps in your understanding, you will need to fill these areas of uncertainty by exploring what other sources of information there are and/or by talking to different groups/bodies. It may be possible to consult with relevant groups. If you undertake any engagement activities you will need to set them out in this section. Please speak to the Consultation Team in Policy, Performance and Governance if you are considering undertaking consultation.

v

Stage 5 - Impact on Residents, Service Users and Staff with Protected Characteristics

Using the information that you have set out at stage 4 you now need to consider carefully whether the new or revised policy, service or other function etc. will impact upon people with a protected characteristic in a positive or negative way. You will need to consider service users, residents and staff (as appropriate). Set out your considerations for each protected characteristic in the appropriate column. If no impact will arise, please indicate this in the appropriate box to show that you have given due regard to equality. When undertaking this assessment make sure you bear in mind the different forms of discrimination, e.g. direct and indirect discrimination, discrimination by association or perception. The protected characteristic 'marriage and civil partnership' needs only to be considered in relation to the first aim of the equality duty – the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation...

vi

Stage 6 – Decision

This section requires you to make and evidence your decision. Use your analysis undertaken in Stage 5 together with other relevant factors such as financial implications. The importance that you give equality considerations when making your decision should be proportionate to the significance of the policy, service or function on advancing equality of opportunity and in fostering good relations. Be mindful that your decision could be challenged, the Equality Act 2010 requires you to 'give due regard' to the three aims of the public sector equality duty. A strong evidence base and transparency will lead to effective decision making.

vii

Stage 7 – Action Plan



In the Action Plan set out any actions that you plan to implement to support your policy, service delivery or change etc. You will need to set a completion date and name a responsible officer. These actions may comprise some form of positive step(s) to support the needs of a particular group or step(s) which will negate any impact on a particular group.

viii

Stage 8 – EIA Sign Off

This section must be completed by the relevant Head of Service and a copy sent to HRAdmin@epsom-ewell.gov.uk when finishing your assessment at Stage 3 – Relevance Check or when completing the full equality impact assessment, Stages 1-8.

Further information is available from:

[‘Equality Impact Assessment Introduction and Appendices’](#). .

[‘Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making England’](#)

If you need further assistance please speak to a member of the Inclusion and Diversity Group

